SPECIAL ISSUE

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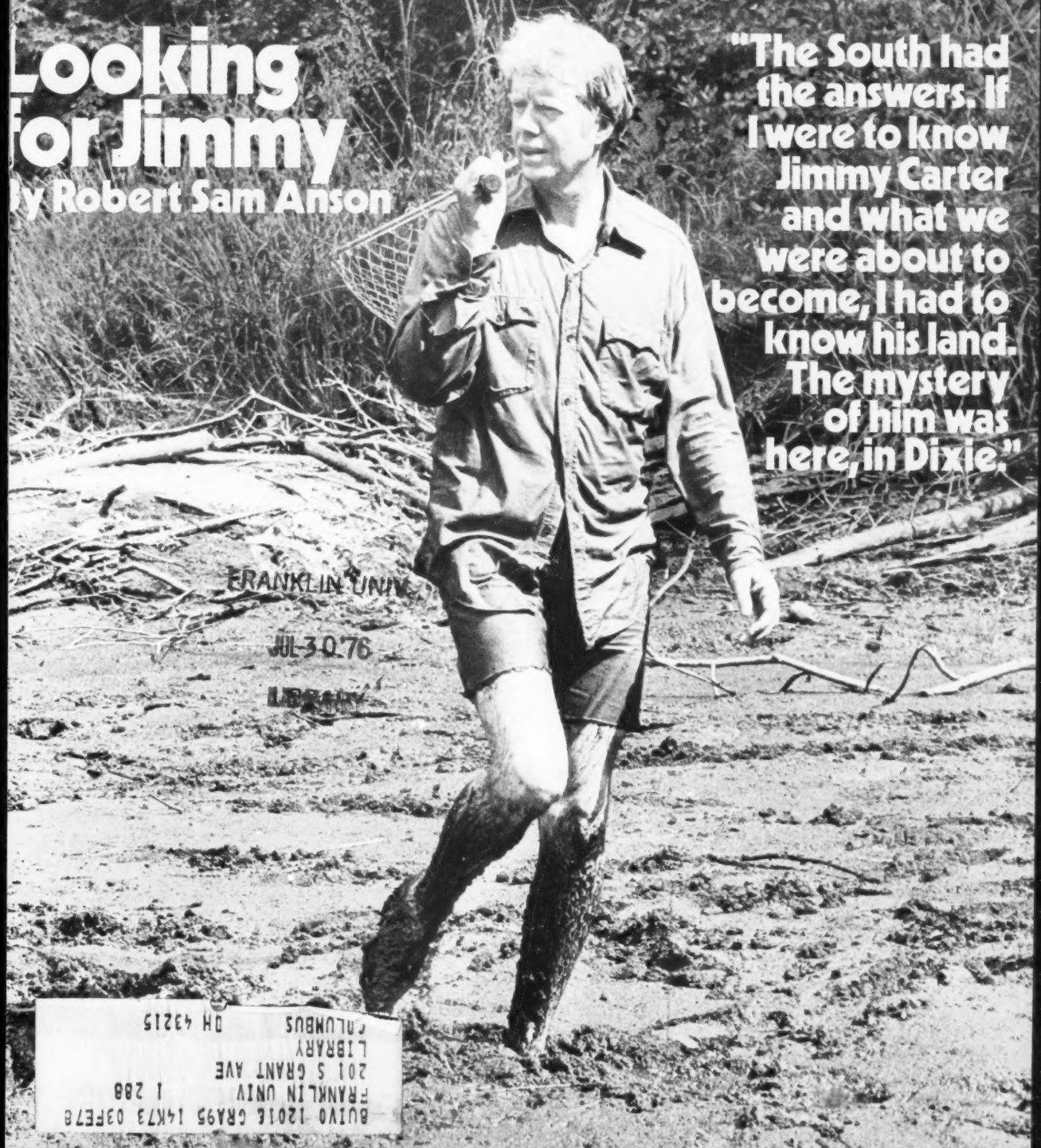
THE FEATURE NEWS MAGAZINE

New Times®

Looking for Jimmy

By Robert Sam Anson

"The South had the answers. If I were to know Jimmy Carter and what we were about to become, I had to know his land. The mystery of him was here, in Dixie."



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AUGUST 6, 1976
VOLUME 7, NUMBER 3

New Times

LOOKING FOR JIMMY

A JOURNEY THROUGH THE SOUTH, RISING

BY ROBERT SAM ANSON

It was bad enough when Robert Sam Anson came home and insisted on showing everyone in the office his new boots, the ones he'd bought in Nashville with the *jenyouwine* lemon wood pegs; worse still when he announced he was going to get "a little spread up in Westchester County and run a few cows," but it wasn't until that day when he asked for his "little ole notebook" that we knew that the South, the sun, or something, had gotten to him.

Well, we hustled him off to dinner at Elaine's, hoping that the sight of all those glittery New Yorkers would cure him, but whatever he caught on those back country roads must have been worse than we figured. 'Cause he's still talking kinda funny and still wearing those boots. And the scary part is that he says if Carter is elected, everyone is going to be talking like that.

In preparation for that day, we have turned most of this issue over to an examination of the South, Jimmy Carter, and what, if Anson is right, we may become.

LOOKING FOR JIMMY is the magazine's fourth special issue since it started publishing in October '73. In the summer of 1974, we ran an entire issue on the Vietnam War; in the summer of 1975, we published Michael Parfit's America's New Poor, which was nominated for Reporting Excellence in the 1976 National Magazine Awards; and, last winter, Marshall Frady's survey of all the Democratic candidates. Frady's tout sheet was not only beautifully written, but remarkably accurate. Of Carter, Frady wrote long before the New Hampshire primary: "Virtually blank of any of the swaggers or macho of a truly dramatic political presence, Carter may be aspiring to the Presidency as little more than an excellent, earnest well-mannered clerk, but he has managed to make himself into one of the most forbidding clerks ever known . . . . Through no more than a single-minded unremitting assiduousness, it has stunningly come to seem possible that he could actually pass the great miracle—that he could inherit the White House."

Now, in 29,000 words, Anson has tried to tell us what that miracle might mean, should it finally pass. Setting off in late May, the magazine's political editor criss-crossed the southern states, looking for the real Jimmy Carter, the Carter that had seemed so elusive to northern reporters. As this issue attests, Anson found pieces of him everywhere.

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EWING

Main Street, Plains, Ga.: Bear Cosby— hog farmer, probate judge and long-time friend of Carter—sits and talks a spell with reporter Anson.

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PHOTOGRAPH BY GEORGE TAMES/ NEW YORK TIMES

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Slow Down

Operation torture/by James S. Kunen

The Statue of Liberty's torch was given new, brighter lights. Roads were closed, restaurants opened, police deployed. No effort was spared in preparation for New York's Bicentennial celebration, and the highlight of it all was Operation Sail. Six million people lined the shore as the world's greatest sailing ships paraded up the Hudson to honor our two hundredth Fourth of July.

Of all the sailing vessels, none was more beautiful than the magnificent Chilean ship *Esmeralda*. Her sleek white hull 309 feet long, her four masts towering 159 feet above the waterline, she sailed out of the mists like a ghostly visitor from a golden age.

The Chilean people used to refer to the *Esmeralda* as the White Lady, symbol of Chilean freedom. Used to—until September 11, 1973, when a C.I.A.-backed junta overthrew the democratically elected Marxist, Salvador Allende. The junta used the *Esmeralda* as an interrogation center. It was, in the words of one of the Chileans detained aboard the *Esmeralda*, "a torture chamber, a flagellation chamber, a floating jail of horror."

Were the United States a champion of liberty, we would not let any Chilean ship call here. Were we a bulwark of freedom, we should certainly not let the *Esmeralda* in. But to *invite* the *Esmeralda* to sail past the Statue of Liberty to commemorate our Revolution—one might think even the bluest of bloods would balk, but no.

"Nobody's proved it yet," William Robinson, editor of *Yachting* and New Jersey state chairman of Operation Sail, said. "Just buying the Communist party line is all the people objecting to it are doing."

The *Esmeralda* was cited "with significant unanimity" as a place of torture by inmates of 12 widely separated prisons in Chile who were interviewed by investigators from the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights of the Organization of American States.

"Commanders Castro and Stange turned us over to the Commander of the *Esmeralda*," testified Luis Vega Contreras, an attorney for the Ministry of the Interior in the Allende government. "My wrists were tied behind my back and my fingers were individually tied. They put me under a heavy powerful jet of sea water. The pressure produced an unbearable pain in the head, ears, eyes and lungs. Using lances made from sticks with steel points, they would stab at us to keep us under the water jets. I was tied up to the steel pillar and given electric shocks on my tooth fillings.

"The treatment these sailors gave the women was outrageous. . . . We could hear the screams of the women and girls protesting these outrages. I saw ——, the daughter of ——, moan and cry every night when they seized her."

Frank Braynard, founder and general manager of Operation Sail, could see no reason to exclude the *Esmeralda*. "It's too bad to hamper a good ceremony by bringing politics into the picture," he said.

Sergio Vuscovic Rojo, former mayor of Valparaiso, testified: "The seven of us were tortured on the ship

Esmeralda for nine days. I was stripped to my shorts and my hands were handcuffed behind me. There was a post there and they tied me to it. They applied electric shock on my skin, on my testicles, on my chest and back. Also, the officers who were interrogating me hit me 50 times with their fists. I couldn't sleep for six days, because they woke me up every ten minutes by slamming the door."

"Let's be realistic," said Borough Councilman James Birmingham of Keyport, N.J., the only councilman who did not boycott a reception given the *Esmeralda* crew by the Keyport Yacht Club. "These are internal problems within Chile."

And Auschwitz was an internal problem within Germany. But even if liberty were divisible, and even if human suffering were not our concern, we could not ignore what is being done in Chile because we are *supporting* it. The junta could not have taken power without us. We installed it. We maintain it. "Once Allende comes to power," Ambassador Edward Korry threatened in 1970, "we shall do all in our power to condemn Chile and the Chileans to utmost deprivation and poverty. . . . Not a nut or a bolt will be allowed to reach Chile." We made good the threat, setting the stage for the coup.

In the three years since the fascists took power in Chile, they have, according to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, arrested 100,000 Chileans, 6,000 of whom remain political prisoners. We have during the same period sent the junta over $1 billion in economic aid. The junta has killed at least 30,000 Chileans. We have supplied the junta with $123 million in arms. The program of terror and torture is continuing today, the U.N. and the O.A.S. report. The junta is always devising "improved" tortures: rats placed in wounds or in the female sex organs, submersion of the prisoner in feces, crushing of wrists and ankles in vises: your tax dollars at work.

A House Bill, HR 14127, would allow refugees from this terror into the United States. It might pass if enough people write letters. At present, the victims of the junta are not welcome here. We've let in only 90 families. So many of them are communists, you know.

But the torture ship *Esmeralda* we welcomed. We would have given hope to the tortured of the world had we turned that ship away. Instead, we encouraged the torturers. For all its new bulbs, Liberty's torch grew dimmer. ●

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Fulminations

Trying to love each other/By Larry L. King

At one of those making-whoopee parties to which southern delegates happily repaired during the Democratic National Convention in New York, an Eastern Seaboard liberal was detained by Hodding Carter III, the Mississippi newspaper publisher, who is not related to the Democratic nominee by blood so much as by regional sharings.

"Ol' buddy," Carter said, "it's time you quit wearing that sour-grapes face and started learning to love Jimmy and Jesus."

The Yankee liberal grinned as if his feet hurt and said, "I'm *trying.*" His tone of voice indicated he might as well be trying to learn to love turnip-green pie.

Though Hodding Carter spoke in good humor, he was addressing himself to an unease—and, yes, a prejudice—still present among many eastern and northern Democrats who continue to be uncomfortable in the company of collard-and-chitlin accents.

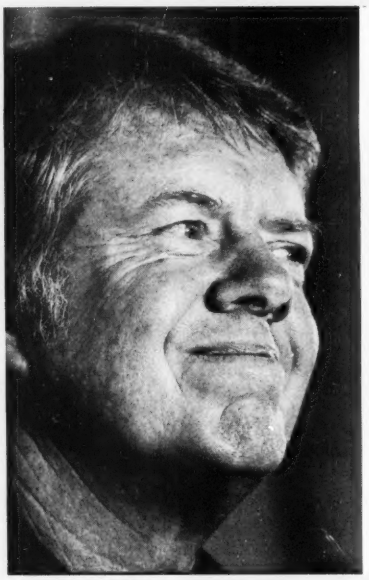
After all, they had grown accustomed over the years to viewing the north ends of south-bound Dixiecrats bolting to their rump sessions with scowls on their faces and harsh words on their lips. Now, suddenly, the perennial dissidents were in charge.

It is more than that East-ablishment Democrats have trouble remembering whether one of Jimmy Carter's top staff aides is named Hamilton Jordan or Jordan Hamilton, more than the fear that they may be left out in the cold when strangers ride into Washington to claim the city. It is even more than that the Yankees too clearly remember Lester Maddox with his axe-handle persuasions or George Wallace blocking the schoolhouse door, or pot-bellied southern sheriffs greeting freedom riders with dogs and chains and fire hoses. Even the haughtiest limousine liberal elitist now knows, thanks to such Yankee precincts as Detroit and Boston, that racism no longer is the exclusive property of Dixie—if it ever was.

No, it is a matter of cultural differences more than not. White easterners, especially, are puzzled by the southern patois and palate, to say nothing of the doctrine of total immersion. What, may the saints preserve us, is a born-again Christian? Why would anyone select black-eyed peas or pecan pie over bagels and lox or boiled New England dinners or cheesecake? What in the world is a Good Ole Boy, and why do none grow much north of Macon, and why are they at once so celebrated and scorned?

How does the word "yawl"—which, as every decent Yankee knows, is a certain type of sailing vessel—get to be spelled "ya'll" and somehow imply the pluralistic? What sort of people name their children Billy Clyde or Bubba or Beftysue Marylou Ann? The Yankee notion that even the best sons and daughters of Dixie may not be

DAVID BURNETT/CONTACT



comfortable in shoes, or know how to select the proper salad fork, was illustrated when that patrician Ole Boy, Averell Harriman, sniffed of Carter: "How will he be nominated? I don't even know him."

Outside the South, black people understand the southern culture much better than do their white neighbors. They, or their ancestors, likely came up from the South after Reconstruction or during World War II—and maybe their cousins or nephews will arrive next week on one or another "chicken-bone special," as blacks long have designated the trains or buses hauling them north from the Montgomerys and Yazoo Citys and Tallahassees.

They once participated in, contributed to and likely retain many of the cultural traditions of their former southern places. When Jimmy Carter sings a hymn invoking "the precious blood of the lamb," they know he ain't speaking merely of mutton.

Not that Yankees—and southerners—failed to *try* to love each other. Sometimes their efforts during convention week bordered on the comic.

At a bash hosted by the Tennessee delegation, New York Governor Hugh Carey recalled that his antecedent, Franklin D. Roosevelt, was the father of the Tennessee Valley Authority and often bathed his withered limbs in the healing waters of Warm Springs, Georgia. Congressman Joe Evins, responding for Tennessee, stretched even further in announcing that the Tennessee Valley Authority had been named in worshipful imitation of the New York Port Authority. It was as if two sewer workers were manfully attempting to convince the other that he exuded no particular odor.

An Alabama delegate cornered a bearded Yankee journalist to say that George Wallace has really been terribly misunderstood. "When Governor Wallace stood in the schoolhouse door," she said, "he was acting as a lightning rod. If *he* took the southern resistance to school integration upon himself, by legal protest, he lessened the chances of mobs taking the law into their own hands. 'See,' he was saying to his constituents, 'I'll fight this fight for us. The rest of ya'll keep cool.'"

The Yankee journalist, who did not for a moment believe any of this, nonetheless cooed his astonishment at such clever tactics and nodded as vigorously as if he'd been asked whether he'd like a soul kiss.

One wouldn't have been surprised to see Al Lowenstein sampling peanut soup, and one *did* see numerous old Dixie heads manfully struggling to smile over gefilte fish.

Maybe it was only political rhetoric when former Senator Ralph Yarborough, of Texas, proclaimed that Georgia Jimmy's nomination at long last ended the divisions of the Civil War.

And then, again, maybe it wasn't. ●

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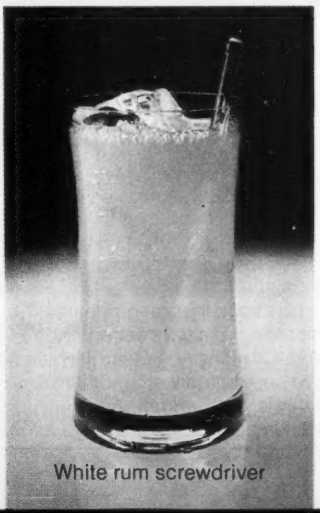

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The Insider

BY TONY SCHWARTZ

Convention chatter / Sex & the powerful

Politics

Convention notes

Unless you count the cataloguing of Amy Carter's ever changing moods, the absence of news from the Democratic Convention was so pronounced that non-fiction as a form often seemed imperiled. Undaunted, our enterprising correspondents waded through the euphoria and were able to glean the following notes, bits and observations from the soporific love fest:

● From the high ironies department: the Democratic delegates quietly approved a series of party positions that were considered evidence of George McGovern's radicalism when he adopted them back in 1972. Included were a federal income guarantee program quite similar to McGovern's much maligned $1,000-a-person plan; a pledge for comprehensive tax reform; support for the Supreme Court rulings on legalized abortion and busing; and a pardon position on draft resisters ("pardon" being the Carter euphemism for amnesty).

● A small but early sign of which way the vice-presidential winds were blowing: after Ed Muskie's visit to Plains, he played golf with Mo Udall and spent most of the 18 holes complaining. Seems all Carter could talk about during the discussion Muskie had with him about the vice-presidency was . . . Walter Mondale.

● Although there was strong support for the choice of Mondale as V.P. among Carter's top staffers, a few were quite disappointed, albeit privately. Their choice would have been Muskie, for strictly pragmatic reasons. Carter is weak among Catholic voters: only 46 percent give him a favorable rating in one recent poll. Muskie, at the least, *is* Catholic. One Carter staffer reasons that if Ford is the Republican nominee, he could pick up many Catholic votes by selecting New York Senator James Buckley as his running mate. Buckley is Catholic, does not have Reagan's reputation as war-prone and would still satisfy the right. The same Carter staffer takes solace, though, in his conviction that Ford simply won't choose Buckley: "He's too dumb to do it."

● Few and far between were the consolation prizes for the many prominent Democrats who *didn't* get the vice-presidential nod. Frank Church, however, got a small favor. When the Idaho senator rose to make a foreign policy speech at the convention, a surprisingly enthusiastic reception ensued. The fact is, it was engineered by the Carter floor operation.

● Walter Mondale may be Carter's bow to the left, but campaign manager Hamilton Jordan's heart seems to lie elsewhere. Jordan remained impassive as a succession of former Carter opponents marched to the podium to join the candidate at the convention's conclusion. But when George Wallace was wheeled forward, Jordan cheered long and loudly. At one point he even lifted his arm into the air—could it have been a raised fist?

● Carter's delivery of the acceptance speech was widely acknowledged as a big improvement on his past efforts to read from a prepared text. One reason is that he practiced it repeatedly in his $750-a-day suite at the Americana. Still, practice doesn't make perfect. How many votes did Carter lose, for instance, when he referred to one ethnic group as the "eye-talians"?

● We've heard of politicians getting cozy with the media, but the Jimmy Carter-*Rolling Stone* connection borders on the absurd. Associate Publisher Anne Wexler worked nearly full time for more than a month out of *Rolling Stone*'s Washington, D. C., office, directing Carter's forces on the rules committee. Her salary was paid all the while by *Rolling Stone*, and she made no small number of campaign phone calls from the magazine's office.

● Though Jerry Brown rose for a brief moment to announce that the entire California delegation had decided to endorse Carter, the show of unity wasn't all it seemed to be. Brown mentioned that two delegates seemed to be missing from the count. One of them was Elaine Brown, Black Panther party chairwoman and herself a Jerry Brown delegate. She refused to jump on the Carter bandwagon, and assured one of our correspondents that at least 20 other delegates similarly refused to do so. Jerry Brown was able to announce a Carter consensus only because he never polled the California delegation.

Presumably his long awaited concession means that Carter staffers will now cease and desist from repeating a description of the guru governor which they had widely circulated: "If it's Brown, flush it."

● If you wonder where power resides in the Carter campaign, take a look at the seating arrangements during the candidate's acceptance speech. Only one non-Georgian seems to have penetrated the candidate's inner circle: Pat Caddell, the wunderkind pollster who worked for

EDWARD HAUSNER/NEW YORK TIMES

Carter & the also-rans: New York's love fest

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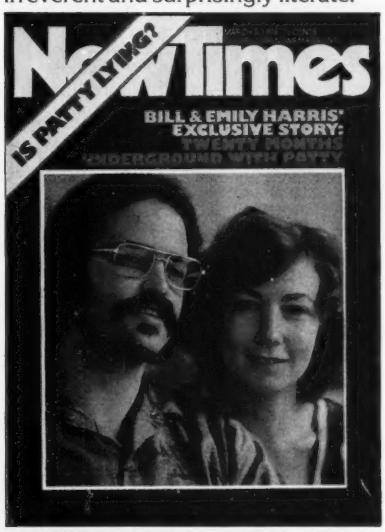

William Safire in the New York Times says we're "the magazine that has an adversary relationship with the world." According to the Washington Post, we're "a new national news magazine of story-tellers." To good old Time Magazine, we're "impetuous."

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Remember, folks, you saw it first...

A lot of NEW TIMES stories were firsts. Newsbeats. Scoops. Sure you read about them in other magazines. Afterwards.

We were the first national magazine to reveal the link between the CIA and the Mafia. We were the first to go underground and interview that protean fugitive, Abbie Hoffman. (Among those who wondered how we found him—the FBI.)

The new wave of doubt about the JFK assassination started in NEW TIMES, with stories like the one that showed there had to be several Oswalds. We were the first national magazine to tell the world those little aerosol cans could be the death of us all. We put est (Erhard Seminars Training) in the public eye. We reported the murder trials of Peter Reilly and Joan Little long before they hit the front pages. And so it goes.

What's happening around here?

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drowning us all...dissected the Great American Bicentennial Sale...dug into the yearly orgiastic revels of a country fair...looked into what happens when single grandparents are forced to live in sin to avoid losing their pensions...ran the first-anywhere story on doctors who sell their patients to hospitals for kickbacks...found the real Mr. Goodbar of the singles' bar murders...

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Kristofferson.

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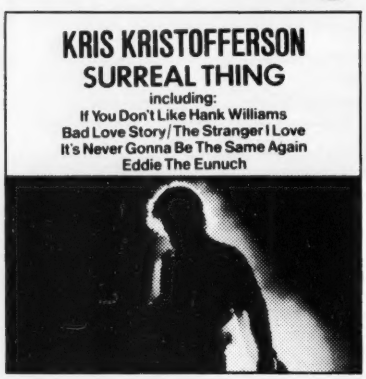
It's "Surreal Thing."



On Monument Records & Tapes.

Produced by David Anderle

Monument distributed by CBS Records.

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George McGovern in 1972. Caddell sat in the family box during Carter's speech, next to Rosalynn and Amy. When Carter summoned key staffers to the podium, they included Caddell, campaign manager Hamilton Jordan, press secretary Jody Powell, mediaman Gerald Rafshoon, campaign treasurer Robert Lipshutz, Georgia state legislator Ben Brown and lawyer Frank Moore, now Carter's liaison with Congress. Oddly, Andrew Young, whom Carter has cited as the most important single figure in his march to the nomination, was not called forward. He appeared only when delegates began shouting his name from the floor.

● Walter Mondale is taking no chance that anything he does might alienate his new alliance with the Carter camp. Shortly after the convention, Richard Moe, Mondale's administrative assistant, called a meeting of the senator's staff in Washington, D.C. During the hour and a half session, staffers were warned not to talk with anyone about the upcoming campaign or even to say so much as "hello" to reporters lest it be misinterpreted. All future inquiries will be directed to Mondale's press office. Moreover, to assure a loyal staff—and to stay within the tight budget Carter has reportedly set for his running mate—Mondale has decided not to add any campaign aides beyond his current Senate staff for his vice-presidential race. Such precautions are unlikely to change the inevitable, however. As Hamilton Jordan put it to one reporter, "It doesn't matter much anyway. Jimmy will never want to see the guy after January."

The bedroom massacre

Acrid memories of the violent sixties have faded in the wake of Jimmy Carter unity , but the vestiges of that era hang on. One memory that refuses to go away is the Fred Hampton murder.

Three FBI agents are among the 28 defendants in a $47.7 million civil damages suit brought by survivors of the December 1969 police raid on Chicago Black Panther leader Hampton's apartment, during which Hampton and fellow Panther Mark Clark were slain. The plaintiffs, who include members of the two victims' families, charge that law enforcement officials conspired to murder Clark and Hampton and deprived other apartment occupants of their civil rights.

During the first five months of the trial, which began in January, FBI agents have dominated the testimony. The guiding motif has been their loss of memory and foggy recollection under questioning from the plaintiffs' lawyers.

One agent, Roy Martin Mitchell,

WIDE WORLD

Hampton: continuing trial

denied four times under oath that he had recently visited paid FBI Panther informant William O'Neal. O'Neal is a defendant in the case who provided the Chicago FBI office with the floor plan of Hampton's apartment a few days before the raid. After consulting with an assistant U.S. attorney during lunch recess, Mitchell admitted that he had flown to see O'Neal in February.

In mid-March, agent Mitchell inadvertently revealed that the FBI had not turned over all relevant information to the plaintiffs' lawyers, even though Judge Joseph Perry had directed them to do so in late January. Perry made another directive, and the government then produced some 25,000 pages of previously undisclosed files. Less than a month later, the government revealed yet another 45 document files on Chicago Black Panther activities.

Buttressed by documents from the Church committee, the plaintiffs have succeeded in marshalling considerable evidence that the FBI was actively involved in attempting to disrupt, terrorize and divide the Black Panthers during the late sixties and more recently.

The emergence of new evidence, however, has created a problem of its own. After government lawyers finally released the wave of documents in early May, they demanded that the plaintiffs be billed $17,353 in reproduction costs. The plaintiffs' legal funds are so depleted that they have been unable to even purchase a copy of the daily transcript. The three FBI attorneys can rest easy. Taxpayer money underwrites their individual copies at $3.00 a page for a transcript that currently spans more than 12,000 pages.

So costly is the trial that Cook County taxpayers have, since 1973, forked over nearly a half-million dollars in fees to John Coghlan, the lawyer representing former State's Attorney Edward Hanrahan, who ordered the Hampton raid. And the trial is a long way from over: only a score of 120 expected witnesses have testified so far.

Contributions to the plaintiffs' legal fund can be sent to The December 4th Committee, 53 East Jackson, Chicago, Illinois 60604.

The price of freedom

Has the Freedom of Information Act become a mere pawn in the struggle between rival corporations seeking to unearth each other's secrets? Such evidence, according to a report aired over National Public Radio, is rather compelling.

The Freedom of Information Act was passed to give the general public greater access to government files. At the Food and Drug Administration Public Documents Center Director Ed Costello says, at least, 98 percent of the inquiries to the FDA are "from industry, from corporate lawyers representing industry and from the trade associations such as the Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Association." By contrast, only 2 percent came from what Costello calls "the angry citizen."

Industry inquiries center on the lab reports that the FDA requires of all companies before approving any new food or drugs. Although the government is not authorized to provide confidential business data under the Freedom of Information Act, the interpretation of the word "confidential" is sometimes ambiguous. Moreover, the pressure to respond to information requests within ten days occasionally permits trade secrets to filter out with more general information.

In any such affair, of course, there is at least one winner. Leave it to a group of Washington lawyers, long on cleverness and short on ethical concern, to cash in. Four of them began Freedom of Information Services, Inc. to alert subscribing companies to any F. of I. inquiries by rival firms. For $220 a year, member companies receive "Same Day Telephone Alert" service. The unsettling part is that the company will also *file* F. of I. requests for firms at a fee of $12.50 plus postage. Subscribing companies thus avoid having inquiries made in their own name. In the process, according to the radio report, an interesting conflict occasionally results: Freedom of Information Services, Inc. files a request for client A to obtain documents on client B—and promptly calls client B to let him know client A has made the request.

Ah, lawyers.

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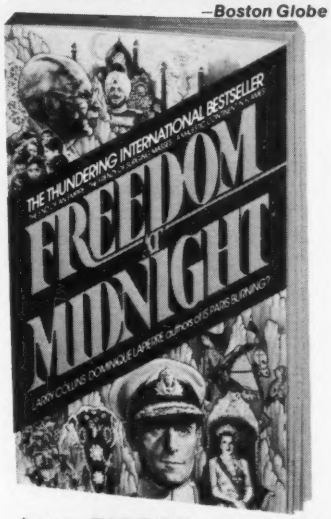

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Seventies

The perversion of power

Power may be the ultimate aphrodisiac, as Henry Kissinger has said, but it also seems to create unusual sexual appetities. That's the

JIM ANDERSON

Sex: how the powerful like it

conclusion drawn by a husband-and-wife psychiatrist team who conducted a seven-year study of call girls and their clients.

According to Drs. Samuel Janus and Barbara Bess, 60 percent of a call girl's clients are "significant" politicians or powerful business executives. (Call girls are defined as "high class" prostitutes who do not solicit on the street.) The researchers, who teach psychiatry at New York Medical College, base their conclusions on in-depth interviews with 42 top-level call girls and 10 madams in New York, Las Vegas and California.

Intriguingly, most of the businessmen-clients are executives in large conglomerates such as the telephone, power and light companies. Such executives also seem to prefer "kinky" sex more than the average "john": acts such as voyeurism, exhibitionism, cross-dressing, submitting to flagellation and fetishism. By contrast, the average john is far more often than not content merely with fellatio. Dr. Bess declined to elaborate much on her findings, pending the publication of a book on them next January, but she did have this pithy comment: "Politicians and business executives travel a lot, which means they are alone a lot. They also have a drive for power, and there is a clear correlation between sex and the drive for power."

Back to you, Henry.

The wind and the lyin'

Bad news about that "Vermont Green Mountain Air" we reported on in our last issue.

It isn't Vermont air, after all. Turns out that when John Bramblett went to have the air canned, he discovered there was no one in Vermont who could do the job. So he went to Massachusetts instead. Blasphemy, you say? "I think you have to look at the broad perspective," Bramblett retorts cheerfully. "The prevailing winds carry most of Vermont's air to Massachusetts anyway."

Moral pollution, we thinks.

All bottled up

The move away from returnable bottles has been an ecological disaster, according to a new Environmental Action Foundation pamphlet entitled *Bottles & Sense*. "We could save 115,000 barrels of oil a day and seven million tons of reusable materials each year if we returned to returnables nationwide," the pamphlet reports.

Oregon already has a state law requiring only returnable bottles, and voters in Maine, Massachusetts, Colorado and Michigan will have a chance to vote on similar laws in November. According to a recent Federal Energy Administration (FEA) study, 73 percent of the public favors a mandatory deposit on beverage containers. Those statistics, however, aren't likely to have any immediate remedial effect. Environmental Action reports that the beer, soft drink and container industries will spend approximately $20 million this year to lobby against returnables.

Taking the toll

We think it's rather amusing: last year, Bell Telephone in New York decided to start charging 10 cents for every information request in the state. That proved particularly annoying to customers in one city who wanted a number in another, and had no choice but to call information.

To counter the problem, many clever customers have been ordering telephone directories—which are free—from a slew of cities around the state. That cost to the company, coupled with the 30-cent refund it owes to customers who make less than the minimum of allowable information requests, has made the whole business a losing proposition. Bell officials say the added cost last year was around $700,000. A sweet irony, yes, but don't hold your breath about its future. The phone folks always find a way to get their due.

Make-work works

Some months ago we reported on a unique program that forced able-bodied welfare recipients in St. John's, Indiana, to work for their money. Township trustee Gary Scheub had recipients sweeping streets, painting town halls and reorganizing township filing systems.

When Scheub instituted his "Workfare" program in the tiny town, he estimated it would cut welfare rolls in half. After a year, the decrease has been 82 percent. Nonetheless, a bill to create similar programs throughout the state was defeated recently in the General Assembly. Scheub found out why when he tried to convince other Indiana cities to follow his example.

UPI

All bottled up: recycling questions

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Welfare directors unanimously told him that the problem of finding working and supervising it on any large scale would be managerially and financially impossible. Scheub scoffs at the claim. He says the officials are just like the people who have dropped off St. John's welfare rolls—lazy—and he vows to fight on.

Media

Kickback

Though the prospect of Philadelphia Mayor Frank Rizzo's recall looms ever larger, hiz honna is no less graceless than before. Thus, when the equally graceless *Hustler* magazine named Rizzo its "Asshole of the Month" in its August issue, it came as little surprise that the mayor decided to crack down. He prevailed on supporters who run

NEIL BENSON

Rizzo: the Hustler *connection*

the city's largest magazine distributer, United News Company, to tear out by hand the offending page from 40,000 copies of the magazine earmarked for Philadelphia distribution. *Hustler* publisher Larry Flynt promptly responded by taking out a full-page ad in the *Philadelphia Bulletin*. Turned down by two other local papers, the ad included an offer to mail the missing page to anyone who wanted it. Though Rizzo had no comment, we do: the two of them deserve each other.

Mind & Body

Dream on

Though there has long been loose talk that dreams have *meaning*, empirical evidence has been more difficult to come by. A team of University of Cincinnati researchers has now convincingly demonstrated that one person's dreams are clearly distinguishable from another's and thus evidence certain personality traits. Moreover, the researchers showed that it is quite possible to arrange one person's dreams in order of occurrence.

In the study, 12 college students slept for 20 consecutive nights at the university's sleep lab, where they were awakened at the end of rapid eye movement periods (REM) to record their dreams. Transcripts were collected, randomly mixed and given to three judges—a psychiatrist, a psychology graduate student and an experimental psychologist.

Astoundingly, all of the judges were able to accurately sort the dreams. They were also able to group each student's dreams by night of occurrence. The researchers believe these feats prove that dreams are orderly, non-random events reflecting day-to-day changes in the individual's psyche. Now how to put that knowledge into common practice.

The tooth about sugar

A sugar that won't rot your teeth is our idea of a revolutionary breakthrough—only it's not such a breakthrough. Finnish researchers have hit on the surprisingly simple notion of replacing tooth-decaying granulated sugar gleaned from sugar cane with nature's own sweetner: xylitol. The sweetener is found in many fruits, vegetables, plants and trees, and can be commercially prepared from fibrous waste products like beech tree chips, cornstalks and pecan shells.

In the Finnish studies, the consumption of a xylitol diet was found to cut cavity formation by 90 percent when rated against a standard sucrose diet. Some subjects on the xylitol diet even found tooth decay reversed: previous soft carious formations became hard.

In another experiment, 50 students at Finland's University of Turku chewed four sticks of xylitol-sweetened gum daily for a year, while 50 chewed sucrose gum. The sucrose group developed an average of three cavities each, whereas the xylitol group actually had fewer cavities at the end of the experiment than they did at the beginning.

American medical researchers are impressed, and the National Institute of Health plans to launch studies of its own later this year.

Paul Engleman, Larry Frederick, Kitty Kelley, Rick Lyman, Joe Sharkey.

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Yellow Fever.

(Smirnoff and lemonade)

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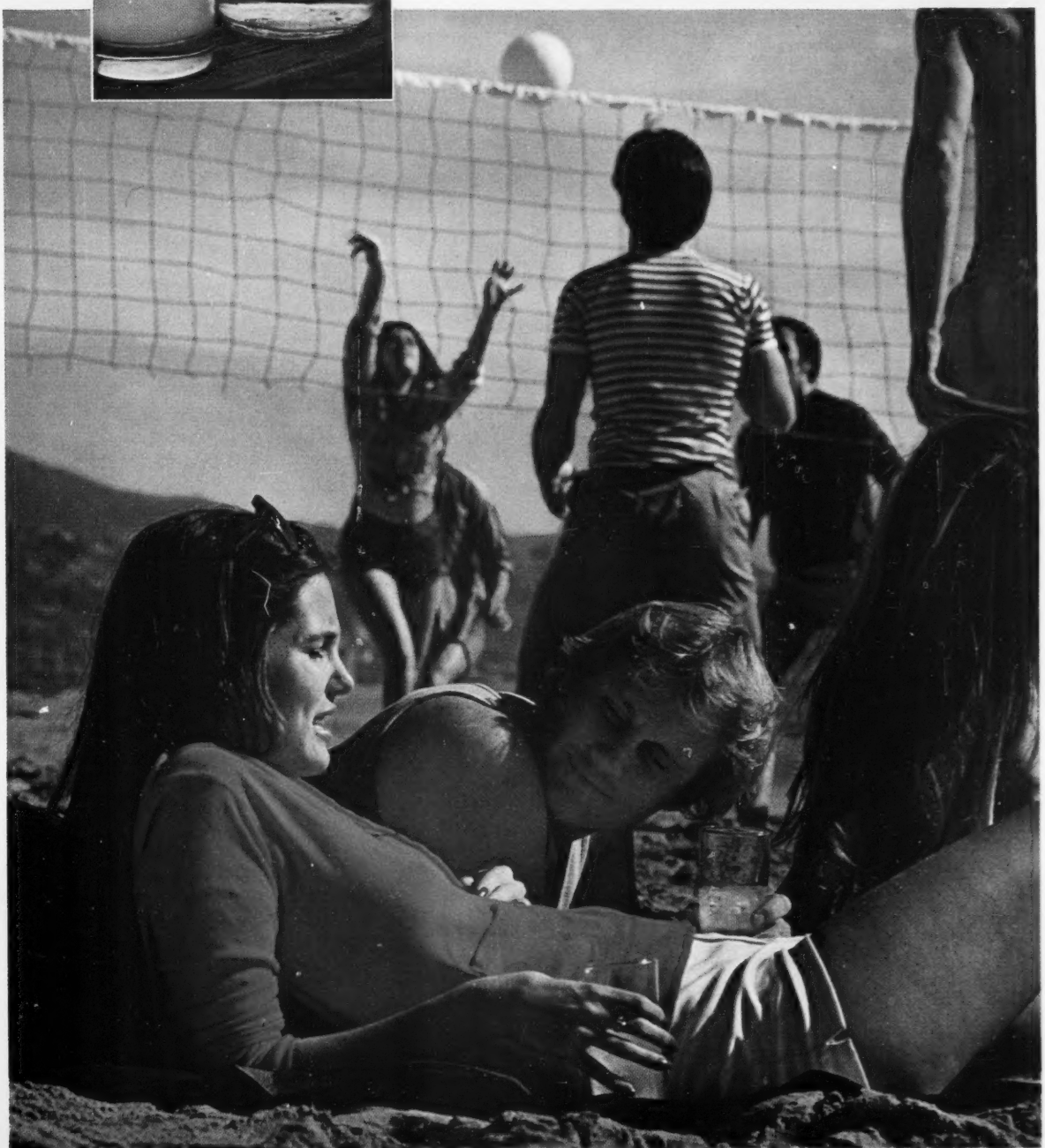

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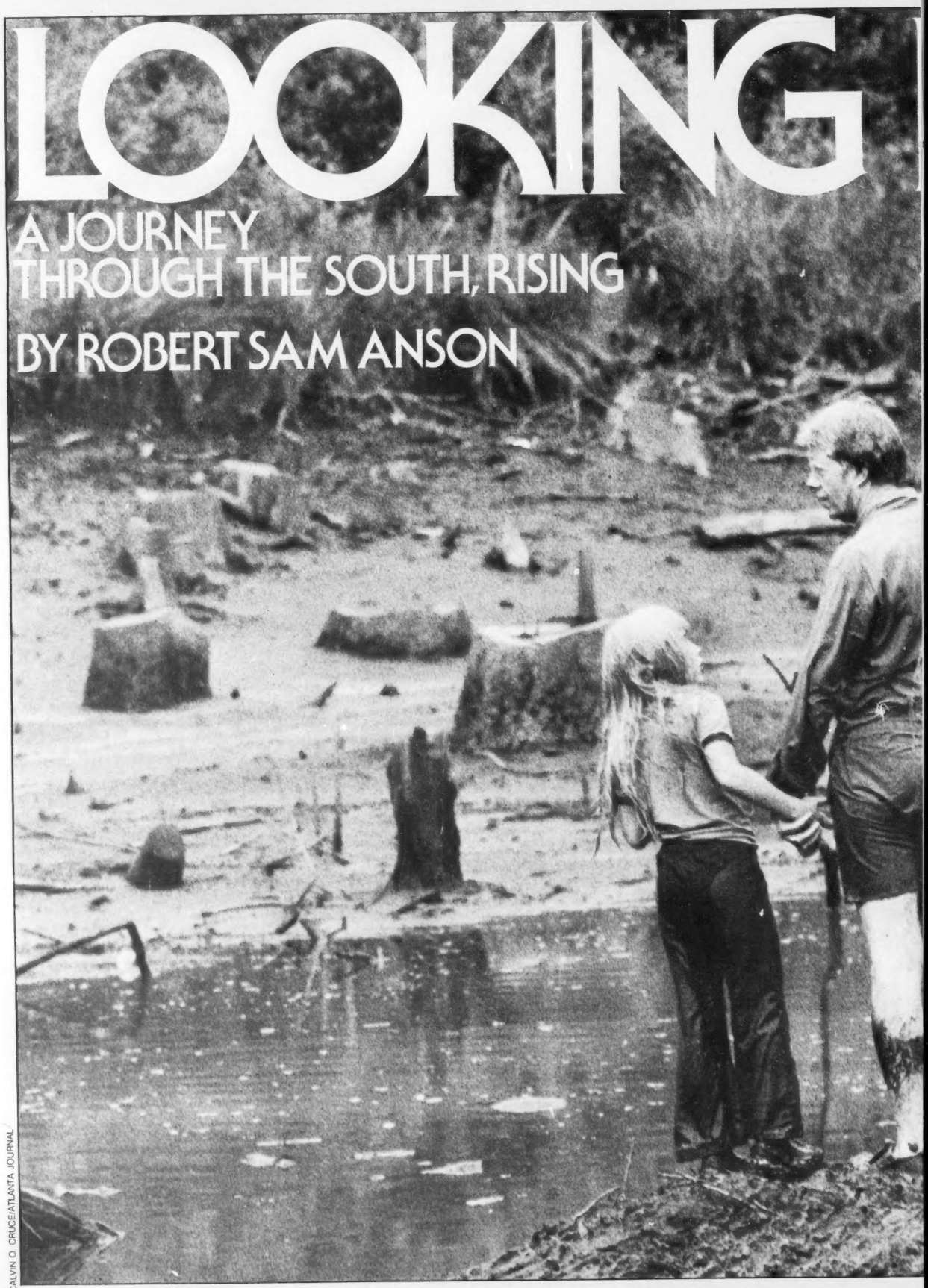
LOOKING

A JOURNEY THROUGH THE SOUTH, RISING

BY ROBERT SAM ANSON



CALVIN O. CRUCE/ATLANTA JOURNAL

'OR JIMMY

For a year I had watched Jimmy Carter, watched him as we all had watched, with wonder, awe and not a little bit of worry. I had seen him in crowds, in small towns and at shopping centers. I had heard his speeches and listened to his small talk, studied his smile and measured his gestures, sought out his friends and gossiped with his enemies.

And still it nagged, unreasoning, gnawing, persistent, the knowledge that there was something about him that was different, something that couldn't be explained or understood by watching him do the things that men do when they set out to become President of the United States.

And then one day a television reporter called me and said, "You gotta see this film we got of Carter. You won't believe it." He was right. At first, I didn't. There, on the editing room screen, was the candidate, smiling as always, shaking hands outside a plant gate. To the owner of each outstretched hand, he said the same thing: "You love me, I love you." Those of us watching half-laughed, half-snickered in astonishment as we ran the film back over and over again. "Can you believe this stuff?" I said to the producer. A North Carolina boy, he smiled and drawled, "If you were from down home, you could."

Down home. The South. More than anything, I guess, it was what had secretly bothered me about Carter—that he was one of them, from there . . . that place. It was not the sort of worry you talked about openly, not unless you were among friends, secure in a Manhattan apartment or a Georgetown drawing room. And when you owned up to it—admitted that when you heard someone talking with that accent, you mentally clicked down a couple of stops, knowing that whoever he was and whatever he said he did, he thought differently (meaning not as well) than you, lived differently, had different values and, if he wasn't wearing them at that moment, probably had a closet full of white patent leather shoes and pastel polyester suits back in whatever God-forsaken place he called home—you found that the same kind of feeling came gushing out. There was something about those people. They were not Americans in the same way we were Americans. That place was, in fact, a different country.

"Why do people live in the South?" Faulkner wrote. "How do they live there? How do they live at all?" I had never been there, aside from a hurried drive to Florida as a child, a change of planes in Atlanta to go somewhere else, but I knew instinctively what Faulkner was getting at, what Willie Morris was getting at when he called his book *North Toward Home*, what all the southern writers were getting at: the brooding malevolence, the squinty-eyed primitives out of *Deliverance*, the grinning sheriffs chawing on their Red Man while they murdered civil rights workers with impunity. Wallace, Mississippi, monkey trials and speed traps; dogs, lynchings, racism and violence, laid over with moonlight and magnolias, pillared houses and Bear Bryant. That is what I knew of the South, and Carter, for all his pretensions, was part of it, bound to it head and soul as surely as the Mississippi rolled to the sea.

"You have to realize about the South," he would sometimes say, when there was no other way to convey what he meant or felt, whether it was where he stood on race or where he stood on Lieutenant Calley. Carter meant it as explanation but there was a ring of apologia to the words, as if even he sensed the difference, how it set him apart, how his birthplace was a handicap in a way that being from Massachusetts or Idaho or California could never be. Could we really

EWING

trust one of them? Were we really one country now? Could we forgive that much blood and history?

The questions were rapidly becoming academic. Without knowing much about him, we were inexorably moving him to the White House. Whether we liked it, whether we even thought about it, the South was rising, taking over and still no one was sure what we had wrought, only that it was happening, and that the man who was making it happen was a mystery. It was then, the night of the Pennsylvania primary to be exact, with the sounds of Dixie and the Battle Hymn of the Republic ringing in my ears, that I decided that if I were to know Jimmy Carter and what we were about to become, I had to know his land. The South had the answers. The mystery of him was here in Dixie.

THAT SOUTHERN SMILE

The ground coming up beneath me is green and full of pine trees, greener, I tell myself, than the country around northern airports. Funny, I am already looking for differences. This is Charlotte, N.C., the largest city in the largest southern state: largest, most industrialized and, or so its reputation goes, most enlightened. North Carolina is Duke and Chapel Hill, Terry Sanford and Sam Ervin. It is home for David Brinkley and Gene Roberts and Tom Wicker and Thomas Wolfe, another one of those southern boys who went north and knew so well you couldn't go home again.

From the looks of Charlotte, a spanking new town built astride two interstates, North Carolina's northernness may be as much psychic as geographic. With its steel and glass towers, Holiday Inns and McDonald's stands, Charlotte could be Anywhere, U.S.A., a Grand Rapids set down in the middle of the Piedmont. Yankees have been pouring in here in droves, lured by the climate, the prettiness of the place and the happy circumstance that North Carolina has almost no unions to speak of and, for all its enlightenment, manages to pay the lowest industrial wages in the nation.

Stan Kaplan, an old political acquaintance, is one of those Yankees. Stan grew up in McKeesport, Pa., moved to Boston, went into the radio business and made his fortune. Lured by the growing market, Kaplan moved to Charlotte in 1965. He bought a radio station that had been grossing $150,000 a year for the previous 20 years, switched its format to hard rock (the deejays speak in northern accents) and saw the yearly gross swell to $2,000,000. Along the way, he became a power in the state Democratic party, something, he says, that could never have happened in a "closed" town like Boston. "You better watch out," he kids over the phone. "If there is another war, I'm going to be wearing grey."

It was easy to laugh at Stan and the utterness of his conversion. But I was soon to discover that the fidelity of his allegiance was not at all atypical. A study conducted a few years ago on the feelings of residents about their respective states posed the simple question: Which do you think is the best place to live? Massachusetts residents, as it turned out, had the lowest regard for their state; more than 50 percent thought that some place other than the Bay State, with all its history and tradition, would be a better place to live. But more than 90 percent of the North Carolinians questioned thought their state was the finest place in the country. The social scientists who took the survey puzzled over the results and finally concluded that the reason that North Carolina ranked so high was that anyone who felt differently simply moved out of the state.

The South is like that, not given to argument or contention. "It's our history," a North Carolina professor explained to me. "You have to realize that the revolutionary war down here was more like a civil war. You'd have family against family, sometimes brother against brother. It tore up this place, and, ever since, we've been almost obsessed with avoiding anything that would tear us up and divide us again." The differences are there, they are merely better concealed than in the North, covered by gentility, good manners, even that smile, Jimmy Carter's smile. "Nothing scares me more," the professor continued, "than when some of my colleagues come to me wearing that smile and say, just as nice as they can, 'Now maybe we can work this out.' Behind that smile, I know there's trouble."

I began noticing things after that, little things that suddenly seemed more meaningful. The incredible boosterism that was on everyone's lips, how Charlotte had the finest this or the best that; even that North Carolinians or southerners generally, for that matter, almost never honked their car horns, however miserable the traffic. "It's not like it is in the North," the professor had explained. "People don't lean out their car windows and argue with one another. Down here, if you say something to a cabbie that could be perceived as a derogatory reference to his mother or the circumstances of his birth, well, he wouldn't argue with you; he might, however, kill you."

Did it mean anything? I could only think back to Carter's almost eerie control, a man who seemed totally self-possessed, who, in public at least, kept smiling, however hostile the questioner, would never raise his voice and yet, according to a man who had worked for him, "could give you a look with those blue eyes of his that could pop the buttons off your vest"—smiling all the while, of course.

My reaction, after a time, was like Stan Kaplan's. I began smiling back, fell into a more measured, meandering way of talk, beginning sentences with "sir"—or "suh," as it became after a time in unconscious mimicry—or "ma'am." A small convention but it made getting along easier. And by getting along, by "whittling" with a man, observing the proper pleasantries and rubrics, I could begin to read between the lines of conversation, such as the talk I had with W. Jack Hudson, rather *Dr.* W. Jack Hudson, former stock car racer, now pastor and entrepreneur of Charlotte's Northside Baptist Church.

Jack Hudson and his church are a real power in Charlotte. They wield the same clout as a good-sized industry and in a way they are an industry. As Billy Graham, another North Carolinian, would say, the Lord has blessed Dr. Jack "real good." Starting out 22 years ago with a congregation of 29 souls, Hudson has built his church to 5,000 strong. The massive red brick edifice atop the hill of Jeremiah Blvd. today includes not only a house of worship but a print shop, a day camp, television studios, a fleet of 33 buses and last, but hardly least, a thriving "Christian Day School" which educates, from kindergarten through high school, the children of the devout, all of whom, as it happens, are white. "If we miss them one way, we get them another," Hudson boasts.

The Northside Christian Day School—like most

"Christian" schools in the South—began some six years ago, almost exactly the time that Charlotte was forced to start busing pupils for racial balance. Hudson, whom one of his fellow ministers describes as "a real dynamo—if he had gone to work for General Motors instead of the church, he'd be president by now–" has been one of the city's most vocal critics of busing, while at the same time being the operator of one of the largest busing companies in the South, a contradiction which seems to trouble him not at all. The Lord provides all the justification he needs. "There's nothing that equalizes the races like the cross," he says.

As Hudson talks, detailing a racism that is only thinly veiled, he reaches from time to time for his Bible, flips through and, presto, fires back a quotation from Scripture to prove just about anything he says, including the inherent evil of restrictive zoning. As you sit there, in the air-conditioned comfort of his paneled office, looking for all the world like a New York boardroom, you can't help but remember that Jimmy Carter is one of these people, a born-again, Scripture-quoting Christian.

As I left Dr. Jack, he was still talking about the breadth of his ministry. His television services were going across the country now, he was saying. All he needed to make the production wholly self-sufficient was some new cameras. But they were expensive. "Money," Dr. Jack drawled, "is always a Baptist problem."

Hudson didn't mention it, but Charlotte had, thanks to other Christians—and an odd Jew or two—ignored his preaching on forced race-mixing. Integration—and busing—was a reality in the schools and the making of that reality was to be instructive. It was not the South that I had expected.

THE JUDGE, THE LADY AND THE LORD JESUS CHRIST

Back in 1968, when the members of the North Carolina Bar Association gave their overwhelming endorsement to James McMillan to fill the vacancy in the U.S. District Court in Charlotte, most of them probably thought they were betting on a sure thing—someone they could trust, someone who wouldn't stir things up. Everything Jim McMillan had done up until then inspired that kind of confidence. Quiet, reserved, dignified, at 51, he seemed the very embodiment of the southern legal establishment: born and raised on a two-hundred-year-old farm, educated at Chapel Hill, law degree from Harvard, a lucrative practice in trial law in Charlotte that had made him a prominent member of his community and president of his local bar association. Jim McMillan understood the South, had grown up in it, been schooled in its traditions, accepting of its values, including at first de jure and later de facto segregation of the public schools. As he put it later, "Nobody thought anything about it. I didn't either. It was part of the way of life."

For Charlotte, N.C., that particular way of life came to an end with startling suddenness in 1971 in the form of a sweeping decision from the U.S. District Court ordering that the schools be desegregated forthwith by means of massive school busing. It was the first such busing order in the nation. Before it would be fully enforced, there would be lawsuits, protests, violence and denunciations, among them those of the President of the United States, Richard M. Nixon, and his attorney general, John N. Mitchell. In the end, the case would go all the way to the United States Supreme Court, which, in a landmark 9–0 ruling, would uphold the judge's order. Charlotte and its schools would change, but no one would change more than the man who had issued the ruling, the southerner everyone thought they could count on, Judge Jim McMillan.

The story of Charlotte and its school busing intrigued me for a number of reasons. I had covered the busing crisis in Boston (a city whose name I was to hear repeated over and over during the next few weeks in the South, invariably with a sense of pride that for all the South's history of racism, "Boston," as it was always put, "could never happen here") and had seen my own attitudes about busing change from sympathy to opposition back to a sympathy mingled with hopelessness. So I wanted to see how here, of all places, they had made it work. Standing against racism, I knew, could be especially lonely in the South. The one thing I had always heard blacks say, explaining their liking of Carter, was that when the times were tough in south Georgia he too had stood against racism and stood almost alone, refusing to join the local White Citizens Council to which all the other businessmen in town belonged and calling for the doors of his own church to be opened to all races after all his fellow elders had voted against it. You couldn't help but admire such people. I wondered what made them do it, how they had managed to survive.

The quick, if rueful, answer I got from Judge McMillan was that he sometimes wondered if he would. The judge, a pale slender man who appears older than his 59 years, said he meant the comment as a jest. But there was too much pain in the grey eyes to hide the torment he had gone through, even if he politely refused to talk about it. He had not sought out controversy, he explained; indeed, would desperately liked to have avoided it. But there was the Law.

"The trouble is that no one understood the truth of the situation," he explained. "It was just a matter of what history was. Segregation is part of our history. People grow up used to it. They don't even question it. Goodness, I know I didn't for an awfully long while." Once the facts were laid before him, however, Jim McMillan had no other choice. In April 1969, he issued his first order. The School Board was to come up with a workable plan for desegregation. A year passed and nothing had happened. The order to bus followed next. Still no response, only attacks, lawsuits and studied indifference by the board. It was becoming increasingly plain that McMillan had fallen into the classic judicial dilemma: he had made the law. Now, he had to enforce it.

In the meantime, his neighbors were making life difficult for him. There were mass demonstrations in front of the courthouse. Late at night, his telephone would ring. McMillan or his wife would pick it up to hear a threat on the other end of the line, an oath of what would happen to nigger-lovers and then the phone would go dead. For a time, things got so bad that an FBI man accompanied him as a bodyguard. For McMillan, though, the worst part was not the threats, even the violence, but the support he didn't get. The ministers who

either stayed silent or, more often as not, denounced him from their pulpits; the newspaper that hounded him, editorially and in its news columns; the times he would go to his country club and find that no one would play golf with him; indeed, would rather leave the course, throwing their clubs down in disgust rather than have to share a foursome with that "sumbitch."

Jim McMillan would tell me none of these things. That was left to others, some of whom confessed their embarrassment for having remained silent while McMillan suffered. For his part, McMillan liked to reflect, not without some pride, on how his community, however grudgingly, had accommodated to the new reality. "They'll litigate until hell freezes over," he said, "but when it freezes over, they'll go on about their business. We've got a tradition of law down here. People may not like it, but once the law is the law they respect it. It's different than in the North." He paused a moment and then reflected, using the same words I had heard Jimmy Carter use so often. "You have to realize about the South. . . . People never outgrow their childhood fears, hates and prejudices, but they can grow to live with them. That's where our tradition of civility helps. We're used to living with one another."

It took considerable doing in Charlotte and it might never have happened, McMillan says, but for the day in 1973, "when I was sitting in my office, wondering what the hell to do next, when Maggie Ray walked in.

"Maggie Ray proved to be the catalyst that Charlotte had been lacking. A housewife, mother of two and biology teacher at one of the local high schools, Maggie was a southerner born and bred, but, or so I thought at the time, a most unusual southerner. She was, in the first place, more liberal than her neighbors. Once, her great grandmother had even shaken Abraham Lincoln's hand. Maggie herself had gone north to school, all the way up to Providence, Rhode Island, and Brown University, where, she remembers, her roommate, a girl from upstate New York, brought her to her sociology class "as a kind of lab exhibit—a southerner who could think and talk and wasn't a racist."

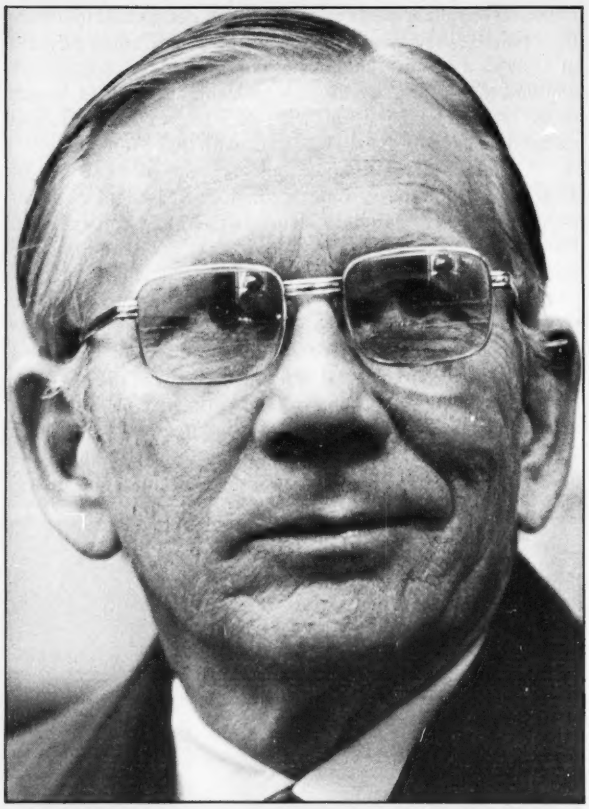
EWING

Now in the spring of 1973 Maggie Ray knew that her town was in trouble. McMillan had just issued yet another court order, warning the School Board that if it didn't come up with a busing plan for the fall term the schools would not open. The board, which by now was packed with busing opponents, was in no mood to budge. It was getting scary for Maggie Ray, who was by now one of the leaders of the group trying to come to grips with integration. Finally, in some desperation, she went to Judge McMillan with her offer of help at the very moment he needed help most.

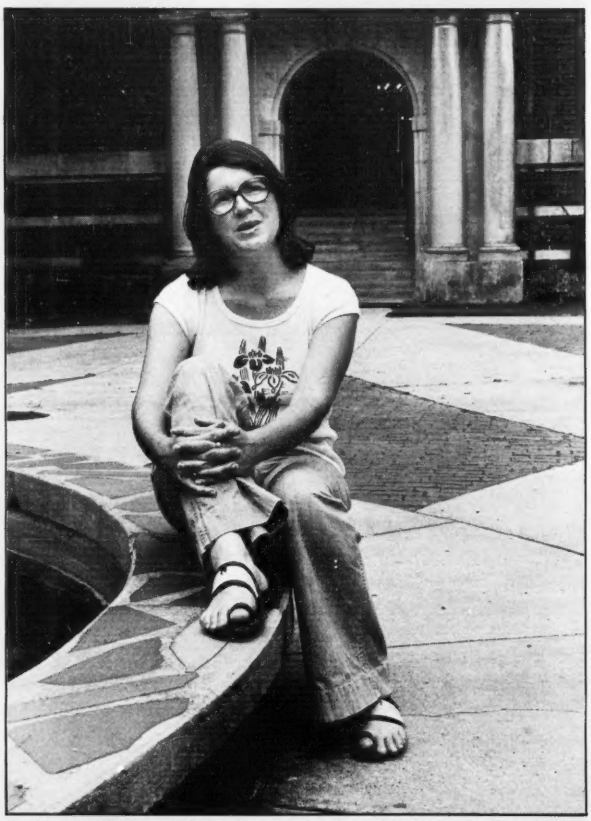
The upshot was that McMillan issued an order, in effect delegating to Maggie Ray's organization—the Citizen's Advisory Group—the job that the School Board had refused to do. CAG's first move was to schedule a series of dinner workshops to thrash out the busing problem. Maggie remembers the first session: "We had blacks, whites, lawyers and ladies from the PTA in Bermuda shorts and tennis shoes, all kinds of folks all over the lot, from the farthest right to the farthest left. It gave me the shivers." Sitting people down to share a meal before talking proved to be an inspiration. "Southerners are trained to be nice at the table," Maggie explains. "By the time everyone got finished eating everyone else's casserole, we all felt a whole lot better about one another." There followed more meetings, followed in turn by eight more weeks of scrapping, negotiating and finally coming up with a workable plan. "We'd have some terrible fights, and I'd be afraid people would never come back," Maggie recalls. "But, somehow, they almost always did." At last, CAG presented its plan to the board. After making a few additional changes, the board capitulated. That fall, district-wide school busing for purposes of racial balance became a reality. As Maggie sums it up: "Those 30 people [the CAG] did for this community what no one else was able to do. . . . Thirty ordinary citizens got in there, slammed around and did what they thought was right. You know," she says, "it's kind of a nice counterpoint to the feeling you get everywhere that the government is going to hell. Heck, we're the government. Just ordinary people."

Charlotte, it seems, also had the help of the Lord, in the person of Mr. W.T. Harris, age 78, the retired owner of a chain of grocery stores, former chairman of the County Commission, born-again Christian and all-around Grand Old Man. When Mr. Harris gets his dandruff up, they say around town, there's nothing stopping him. And nothing gets it up quicker than a case of damn foolishness, such as the time when the new owners of his grocery chain brought in a consultant all the way from New York, paid him $50,000 and set him to figuring out what the buying public thought of when they heard the name of Mr. Harris' stores. "Hellfire," Mr. Harris exclaimed, permitting himself his strongest expletive. "They didn't need to bring in anyone from New York. I could have told them that. When people hear the name of my store, they think one thing: 'good food.'" Mr. Harris, at the behest of Tom Ray, Maggie's husband, brought that wisdom to bear on Charlotte's busing problem. His technique was simple. He visited all the community leaders still opposed to busing and asked them but one question: "Do you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ?" No one could answer no to a question like that in a city like this, so when they said yes, Mr. Harris followed up with the clincher, "Then you follow the Lord's will and do right by the schools."

Whatever turned the trick—Jim McMillan's lonely courage, Maggie Ray's civic-mindedness, Chamber of Commerce calculation or divine intervention—busing has worked in Charlotte. Whites have not deserted the schools in droves. Test scores for all pupils, black and white, after an initial



GEORGE LONG



BRUCE ROBERTS/PHOTO RESEARCHERS

Judge McMillan (above), who ordered busing in Charlotte, was "wondering what the hell to do next" to implement the order when Maggie Ray (below) appeared.

nose-dive have now risen above the achievement level before busing. Charlotte thinks so much of itself that a year ago, in the midst of Boston's worst troubles, the town sent a delegation of students north to advise their Yankee cousins.

Things will never be the same in Charlotte anymore, not for the schools, where there is a new activism and concern for the quality of education, and certainly not for Judge McMillan. Riding with him through Charlotte, I asked him a bit about his background. He mentioned casually that during the war he had served in the Navy as a bomb disposal expert. I jokingly suggested that the experience might have been good preparation for dealing with busing. "No," he said with a sad smile. "What I did didn't take any courage. All I did was what was right." Just then, we passed by the big white clubhouse of one of the local golf courses, and the judge remarked, a little wistfully I thought, what a fine course it was to play and the grandness of the dining room. "Don't you play there?" I asked. "I used to," he said.

Leaving the city that liked to think of itself as a "junior-sized Atlanta," I couldn't escape the conclusion that there was something of the best of Charlotte's people—the Jim McMillans, the Maggie Rays—in Jimmy Carter. For a northerner never really confronted with the dilemma of race it was something that was easily missed. We paid lip service to equality, maybe even had a black friend or two or had spent a summer in Mississippi—or, more likely, had given some money so someone else could go to Mississippi—but there it ended. We had escaped the burden of the South's racism, along with the guilt that went with it. But in escaping the horrors, we had been denied the triumphs, the small, incredible victories won by "ordinary people," as Maggie Ray liked to put it. Until Boston, we had been denied the moral choice that every southerner had to make. And, when Boston arrived, we chose only too clearly.

I was, in a small way, beginning to realize about the South, how you had to remember its history, and, remembering it, measure its men and women by different standards, not so much by how far they would go—whether they would pass every test of liberal purity—but by how far they had come. What impressed me most about Charlotte was the loneliness that "doing the right thing on race" brought. Later, when I talked about it to Sheldon Hackney, an Alabamian, southern historian and now president of Tulane, he used an image that I heard often in the South, that of family. "The South, like any other part of the country, is a diverse place filled with diverse people," he said. "But, in a sense, every white southerner is part of the same family, a clan with the same shared attitudes, history and tradition that keep it together like any other family. In the North, if you decide to become a radical, you can go off and find a hundred other people who are radicals just like you. It's not like that in the South. When you do something radically different here, you're out on your own. It can be very lonely."

That is what Carter had done. I remembered Sumter County, Georgia, Carter's home, from the clippings; the yellowed tales of SNCC voter registration in Americus, just up the road from Plains; of Laurie Pritchett, the legendary police chief of Albany ("Al-BIN-ee" they pronounced it in Sumter County, as did Carter, when referring to the capital of New York State), who rounded up Martin Luther King's demonstrators by the hundreds. What was the Movement song that Pete Seeger had written? "No more Pritchett, no more Pritchett, over me, over me. . . ." That was Jimmy Carter's South, a harder, meaner place than Charlotte. And, on race, he had stood up, gently, to be sure, with moderation and qualification, but alone and different nonetheless. Even today, his youngest child, Amy, was attending public school—a school 80 percent black. Well, maybe it was more Carter-conniving. And, after all, it had been easier for him. Jimmy Carter wasn't a Maggie Ray. He was the scion of Plains' leading family. The town might not like it but they couldn't very well damn someone who owned them lock, stock and peanut barrel like the Carters did. Still. . . .

"BOY, WHERE DOES YOUR DADDY HUNT?"

In another age, he might have been a captain of a Confederate cavalry. He certainly had the looks: lean, blond and a glint of romantic merriment in his eyes that not even his mod wire-rimmed glasses could conceal. And that name. You could just hear Stonewall Jackson calling after him, "Get me Lassiter, dammit. Yes, that Tarheel, Tally Lassiter." Alas, the War (you don't have to ask which one) was over; and Tally, instead of leading charges up Little Round Tree, was studying pre-med at the University of North Carolina. There was still a good deal of the Old South in Taliaferro Lassiter Jr., however, and a lot of the New South, too. He was of the first generation of southern inheritors, those young men and women who grew up not having known segregation and for whom the turmoil of the sixties is but a memory and a distant one at that. Unlike Jimmy Carter, Tally has reached adulthood with racial equality a given. There was no struggle in his life, no agonizing personal choice; for the Tally Lassiters, blacks are merely different—they are not treated differently.

I was anxious to meet someone like Tally Lassiter, of his age and upbringing and education, to measure the differences not only between Tally and his elders but between Tally and his contemporaries in the North. They turned out to be considerable on both counts.

Southerner that he was, Tally asked the questions first, starting with the most important: Where are you from? It is the question you always hear in the South, asked not only of Yankees but of other southerners. "Southerners are always trying to get a fix on people, gauge them, figure out where they are coming from, literally as well as figuratively," a Tennessee journalist later explained to me. "Asking someone where he's from and how he answers can tell you a lot about him. Now, a northerner will say, 'Oh, from Pennsylvania or New England' and sometimes you even hear, 'Not from anywhere in particular.' A Southerner would never say that. He would always be specific. 'Choctaw County,' he would say, narrowing it down as much as he could so you would know him better and feel more at ease. And, if you want to know him best, you say, 'Boy, where does your daddy hunt?' If you say that, well, you're really down home."

Tally's home is Washington, N.C., "where the Joan Little business was," he hastened to add, making sure I knew what kind of North Carolina he was from: rural, conservative,

tidewater tobacco country. The eldest of five children, Tally's father was a general practitioner and a God-fearing Southern Baptist. Tally, like Carter, could josh about his home town and had a fine sense of irony about its foibles and its ways. But he made it clear that he wouldn't have wanted to grow up anywhere else and, heaven knows, not in the North. People were colder in the North, more uncaring about each other, he said, and their prejudice about southerners was a wonder to behold. "When they come on to me like that, treating me like I was some barefoot kid from the woods, well, I play the role for them. Talk even slower than usual, with more of a drawl. I let them think I'm as dumb as they think while inside I'm laughing at them all the time."

With that, there followed for the next two hours, hurried along by good wine and food, a view of the South that is usually hidden from outsiders, a remarkable portrait of its strengths and its weaknesses seen through the eyes of one of the young men who would one day be running it. Here's some of what Tally said:

"When you live here, you're always conscious of the North. You all are around us all the time. You own so much of us. North Carolina Power and Light—90 percent of its stock is owned by northern banks. We pay them and they send the profits right up north.

"Most of the kids in my high school didn't go to college, maybe only 20 percent did, and almost no one went out of the state, much less up to the North, aside from a few of the black students who got scholarships to places like Cornell. When people heard I was going off to Chapel Hill, well, it was like I was going to hell. Chapel Hill is sin city back home. There are socialists here, free lovers, even atheists.

"My part of North Carolina is a pretty small inbred place. Everyone is pretty much alike. Anglo-Saxon, for one thing. When I went up north once, and went into an Italian restaurant and met a real Italian, I thought it was pretty exotic. There aren't even any Catholics at home. One time, a Catholic priest came to our town. He was a missionary. It was such an event that my high school newspaper sent me out to interview him. I laugh sometimes about how small Washington is, but there's something about it that's secure. Like being part of a family. I want to go to the best medical school I can, I guess somewhere in the Ivy League. But I won't stay north. I'll come home. I know I will.

"In the South, if you haven't worked with your hands, you haven't worked. You haven't had a deep and honest day's job. Work is a purifying thing. It makes you better than you are, really. People can forgive a man, even if he beats his wife, so long as he works. People know that about Jimmy Carter. They know he's gotten his hands dirty. It makes him a believable, decent person. He's not like McGovern at all, who never worked, not the way we think of work here. He was a teacher. You know the old saying,'If you can't do it, teach it'—that's what people thought of McGovern. It's almost like a baptism for southern politicians to go out and get their hands in the dirt. I know some really pretty well-off men in my home town. When they come into town from the farm, they almost make it a point to wear dirty clothes. The dirt on those clothes is a badge of honor down east.

"In the South, big anything is evil, big government especially. Big government is identified with integration and welfare. Big government is always telling you what you can do and what you can't do, even whether you can plant tobacco on your land or not.

"I guess I'd vote for Carter just because he is a southerner alone. He'd be a resurrection for the South. Carter represents all the South stands for. He's Southern Baptist for one thing, and that's important here. Even the racists like him for that. He's a small town boy who made good. Been in the military and that's certainly a plus. It's hard to do much wrong if you've been in the military, especially if you're an officer, like Carter was. Just everything about him is so southern. Even that smile. It's like when you're talking to your grandmother and you can't think of what to say. So you smile. That's Carter. And another thing I like: the way he takes big complex things and talks about them in a simple way, without talking down to you. He just makes sense. Gee, I like him. The man even looks southern. And I understand he hunts and goes fishing. Well, heck, that's the South I know. I know lots of people like Jimmy Carter. Good people. I trust him."

In black and white, Tally's comments about Jimmy Carter may come off as sheer chauvinism. But if you had been there in that Chapel Hill restaurant, with a country-western band beginning to warm up in the background, they wouldn't have sounded that way. He talked quietly, almost religiously, about his home and how it had been so misunderstood for so many years. The closest he came to anger was when I mentioned racism. "Racism," he snorted. "I don't see how you all can mention racism after Boston." There was, in his tone, a real earnestness, as if he were trying to explain the South to someone who could never hope to understand. "You could be down here twenty years," he said, "and still be an outsider." His admiration of Carter was, in large measure, down-home pride, but I supposed that after a hundred years without a president, he was entitled to it. Carter would be good for the South, Tally was saying, not because he would bring it a larger share of the pork barrel—the southern dominance of Congress had long ago ensured that—but because he was, as Tally saw it, the embodiment of the best of the culture. He would be good for people like Tally Lassiter. Then, he might not have to put on an act for his northern friends.

As we finished talking politics and settled instead into things that united rather than divided us, the band struck into a deafening hard-country number. There were whoops of delight in the restaurant and, here and there, young people began stomping their feet in time to the music. Tally's face reddened slightly. "I suppose you're thinking that the barefoot boys are at it again," he said shyly. "No," I answered, "we have country music in New York too. As a matter of fact, I listen to it all the time." His face brightened immediately. "You're kidding? You mean you really do? In New York? Hey, that's all right." For Tally Lassiter, it was all going to be all right.

Wherever I moved in the South, I kept encountering that same feeling, a kind of defensiveness about being a southerner, an almost compulsive need to explain oneself, set the record straight and put the South in a favorable perspective. Such "defensiveness," if it could be called that, was odd in that it managed at the same time to accompany a fierce pride in manners and customs that were uniquely southern. At the very core of it, of course, was the uniqueness of the southern experience, a history at once glorious in its tradition and freighted down by an almost existential guilt. The "burden of southern history," C. Vann Woodward called it. Nothing in the North could compare with that burden. We did not carry the guilt of slavery and racism. We were not a defeated people. Of course, it was changing. The country was melding. As the South shook off its racism, we were picking it up. And Vietnam, at long last, had made us all a defeated people. But the change was slow, and there were other important psychic differences that were represented in a Tally Lassiter or a Jimmy Carter.

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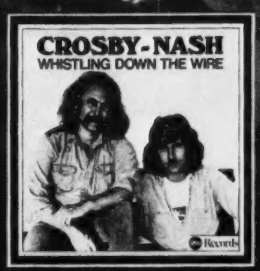

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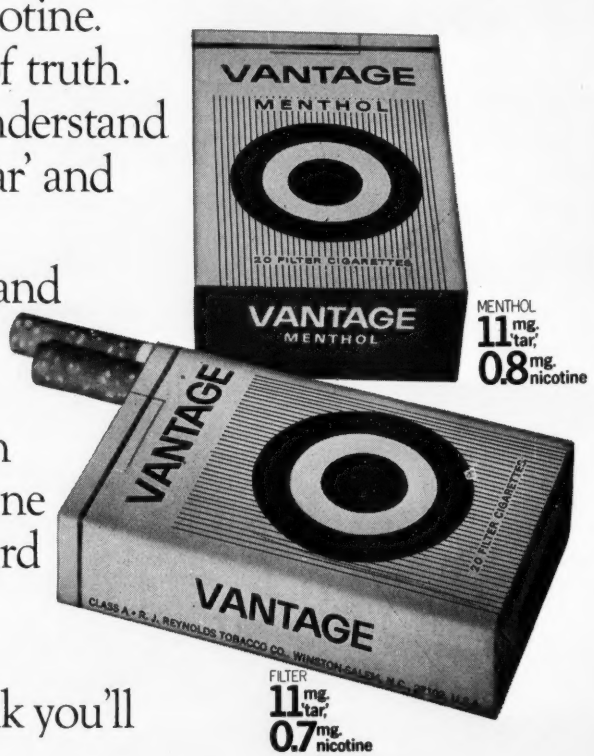
If you agree with us, we think you'll enjoy Vantage.



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I couldn't imagine sitting around with other northerners and chewing over our "northernness." In the South, some writers and academics, and not a few people sitting outside filling stations, seemed to make it a full-time occupation. "Southerners," John Seigenthaler, the Pulitzer Prize winning publisher of the *Nashville Tennessean*, said to me, "think that if they look at the lint in their navel long enough, it will become a cotton ball."

But they thought not only of themselves but how we thought of them. Again, there was that defensiveness. One day in Americus, Georgia, during the middle of my trip, I was talking with a college professor and his wife when, out of the blue, she blurted, "I've never thought we were as good as you were." There was an awful silence for a few minutes afterwards and the professor, a bright, articulate man, flushed with embarrassment. But his wife had spoken an important truth—not that southerners weren't as good as we northerners but that they *thought* they weren't.

I had sensed something of that feeling in Jimmy Carter. Not so much Tally Lassiter's defensiveness but a recognition of his difference, and that those differences would be held against him. In 1972, he recounts in his autobiography, he and a few close advisers discussed the possibilities of his running for the presidency and the factors that weighed against it. The first was that he was a farmer; the second, as he put it, was that "I live in the Deep South and no southerner has been elected president in more than a hundred years." All that talk ended after the decisive victory in Ohio. That night in Atlanta, in a hotel ballroom packed with six thousand of his supporters, Carter declared: "I am proud to be a southerner." As the room fairly shook with cheers, he continued: "We are one country now."

Politically, Carter might be right, but as I headed deeper south through the endless miles of tobacco fields and Stuckey stands toward Charleston, the differences Jimmy Carter didn't like to talk about were becoming increasingly apparent.

CHARLESTON: THE GRACIOUS MAUSOLEUM

No one takes Charleston seriously anymore, not even southerners. It is the South's family curiosity, the old maid aunt who kept her crotchety ways and simply did not pay any mind to the world growing up around her. Her world—the one that counted—was the musty attic full of old treasures. Granddad's rocking chair in the corner. The Civil War saber, the trunk full of flowery notes from beaus, sent to auntie all those years ago when there was no one more beautiful, more possessed of charm and grace, in the land. You smile at an old aunt like that and treat her peculiarities gently. Her world has long since slipped away, and you know you are poorer for it.

That is how it is with Charleston, a fly frozen in amber, the last living relic of the Cavaliers. There was a time when Charleston was the finest city in the country. None could rival her sophistication, her commerce, her learning or her style. From the great houses built on the water's edge, they would watch the tall ships gliding in and out of the harbor, like so many swans bound for England with cotton and tobacco, bringing rum and sugar up from the Indies. And, in the stinking holds of some of the ships, less graceful than the others, came the human cargo on which Charleston and the South depended for their lifeblood. Charlestonians scarcely had time to worry about the slavers, though, so numerous were the fancy balls, so noisy were her streets with the clatter of fine carriages bearing gentlemen from the plantations, so total was the conviction that nowhere could life be such a pleasant fantasy.

And, then, of course, it ended.

The ships stopped coming. The planters no longer rode into town in fine carriages. There were fewer balls and those that remained were but a shade of their former elegance. The Yankees came, first to burn the town, later to exploit it. Charleston decayed and declined but, somehow, did not die. Even in the worst of times, through war, earthquake, fire and flood, something about Charleston endured.

About ten years ago, Charlestonians set out to recapture whatever it was that had made them great. Restoration became a public mania, to the point where, today, one of the city's best young architects complains that "the only designs of mine people will buy are all arches and pillars, the sort of stuff no one has been building in more than a hundred years." Charleston doesn't care. The past is why it exists.

To walk through Charleston's narrow streets is to be carried to the 1830s, the city's golden age. Charlestonians take great pains to preserve the illusion. The St. Cecelia Society is still the final arbiter of who has arrived and who has not in Charleston, and no amount of new money will buy entrance. There is even an attempt to bring back the plantations, not as working farms but as museums. One of the best, Middleton Place, boasts that in three hundred years it has never been deeded out of the family, among whose members are counted the president of the first Continental Congress, a signer of the Declaration of Independence, the first American ambassador to Russia and a signer of the ordinance of secession.

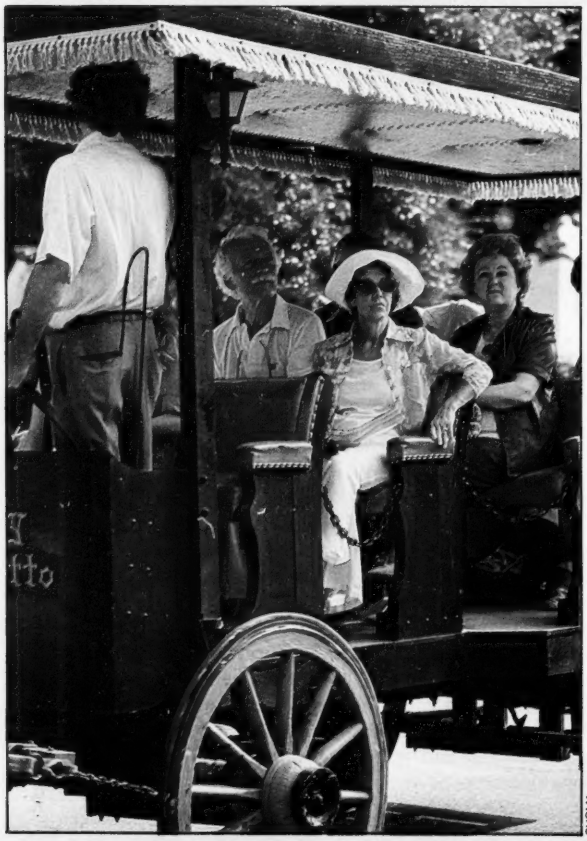
The past is not only in Charleston's buildings; it is in its people. All Charlestonians I spoke with had one thing in common. They all knew where they were from and how long they had been there. Like Charles Ravenel, "Pug," as he's known. "If Jimmy Carter had been a southerner like Pug Ravenel, his southernness would never have been an issue," a mutual friend of both men had told me. "Pug is the kind of southerner northerners feel comfortable with. Doesn't talk with a big accent. Didn't grow up on a farm. Doesn't have a big thing about the military. And none of this born-again Christian business. Pug's bright and sophisticated. From the northern point of view, he did everything right. Went to Harvard. Was captain of the football team. And made a lot of loot on Wall Street. He only came back to run for office. That's the kind of southerner you all like."

The office Pug Ravenel came home to run for was governor. He very nearly made it. After a slick media and issues campaign of the kind that had never been seen before in the South, and up North goes by the name "Kennedy-style," Ravenel defeated the Democratic political establishment and won the party's nomination handily. He was considered a shoe-in for governor. But, at that point, the law stepped in. Out of nowhere, his opponent discovered an obscure state statute that required a five-year residence before a politician could run for office. Ravenel, after running up a campaign

SYGMA

SYGMA

First the Yankees burned Charleston; now they've come to exploit the city's picturesque history and the lowest industrial wage in the nation.



SYGMA

debt in excess of $200,000, was disqualified. The turn of events was bitterly ironic. The Ravenels—there are some 57 of them listed in the Charleston phone book—have been in Charleston some ten generations, and Ravenel can trace his lineage back to 1392 and the court of France. No matter; Ravenel was out. For the time being at least, a southern politician even more attractive than Carter was on the sidelines.

Jimmy Carter, as a matter of fact, is very much on Pug Ravenel's mind these days. He endorsed Carter last November and would have done it even earlier but for a meeting with Carter in September when the former Georgia governor, as Ravenel remembers, "looked me in the eye and said with dead seriousness, 'Pug, there's just no way anyone can take it away from me.'" Carter turned out to be right, of course, but at the time, Carter's cocksuredness, coupled with his utter lack of humor, worried Ravenel. He is not worried anymore, however, and the talk around Charleston is that when Jimmy chooses his cabinet next fall, Pug will be high up on the list.

He has an easy smile and the good humor to go with it. Around his exposed-brick, restored townhouse office are mementos from the campaign, pictures of his family, a fine antique or two and a leather-bound edition of *Plutarch's Lives* which,to judge from his conversation he seems to have read. The total effect is of elegance, breeding and old money. Nothing would lead you to suspect the truth, namely that Pug Ravenel's father was a dock worker and that if it hadn't been for

"I TRAVELED AROUND THE WORLD FOR 15 YEARS, BUT ALWAYS KNOWING I WOULD COME BACK HERE. IT'S SOMETHING IN THE BLOOD, ALMOST REFLEXIVE" — CHARLIE ("PUG") RAVENEL

a scholarship his son probably could not have afforded to go to college at all.

Ravenel hasn't forgotten the origins from which he sprang. He made a lot more money as a financial analyst in New York than he does now. Not once, though, did he seriously consider ever staying there. Charleston, for all its quirky conventions, was home. "The South cares about roots," Ravenel said. "When people came to the Northeast, they migrated. When they came to the South, they stayed." The Ravenels stayed, even after the War. Before the War, they had been merchants and planters. The War left them virtually penniless. Yet there was something about the place that always kept them. "I've lived that transient life," Ravenel said. "I traveled around the world for fifteen years but always knowing I would come back here. I don't know. It's something in the blood, almost reflexive. All I know is that whenever I was away, I desperately missed those roots." Coming home was not easy. There was some muttering around Charleston that Ravenel, returned from Harvard, a White House fellowship and Wall Street, had grown too big for his britches. It took him time to ease back into the town. As Ravenel puts it, "People were glad to see I wasn't such a hot shot. I wasn't doing too many sensational things." Acceptance, though, was inevitable. It didn't matter that his family was broke. Pug was a Ravenel.

So was it, too, with Jimmy Carter. The experience was different—Annapolis instead of Harvard, the Navy instead of Wall Street—but the homing impulse no less strong. The Carters had been in Georgia since 1830, coming to the land from North Carolina, Carter records, "shortly after the Indians moved out." Carter, who had been away in the Navy eleven years, decided to come home after his father died. "I began to think of the relative significance of his life and mine," Carter writes. "He was an integral part of the community and had a wide range of varied but interrelated interests and responsibilities. He was his own boss and his life was stabilized by the slow and evolutionary changes in the local societal structure. My job was the best and most promising in the Navy and the work was challenging and worthwhile. The salary was good and the retirement benefits were liberal and assured. The contact with Admiral Rickover alone made it worthwhile. But after some torturous days, I decided to resign from the Navy, and come home to Plains—to a tiny town, a church, a farm, an uncertain income. I had only one life to live." Georgia, after all, was home.

It is well-nigh impossible to understand the mystical attachment southerners like Ravenel and Carter have for their home. The land has given them so little. For an intelligent man like Ravenel, whose tastes run to Dostoevsky and Plutarch, or Carter, who dabbles in Tillich and Niebuhr (and, as a child, also read Dostoevsky), life in a suffocatingly small town seems to offer even less. And yet they keep coming back, as their ancestors did before, as their children surely will after. Certainly, I could not understand it. My home town, Cleveland, was something to be escaped, and, once escaped, a place to return only for funerals and an occasional Christmas. Southerners themselves found it difficult to explain. Intellectually, maybe there was nothing to understand. To feel as a southerner did about his home you had to forget the mind and surrender to the emotion of the place. There was a taste of the feeling in the quotation from Dostoevsky that Ravenel kept citing in his campaign, words not unlike those Carter uses in his speeches. "And even if we are occupied with important things, even if we attain honor or fall into misfortune," the quote goes, "still let us remember how good it was once here, when we were all together, united by a good and kind feeling which made us . . . perhaps better than we are."

Charleston was like that with its fantasies, though no more so than Plains with its. You could joke, as Carter often did, about home, but you could never turn your back on it. Pug Ravenel was home to stay. Oh, Jimmy Carter might lure him off to Washington for a spell, or maybe, as people were predicting, he might take on old Strom in 1978, but Washington would only be a way station. "We have something down here," Ravenel said. "Sometimes I'm not sure what it is myself, but when I look north and see all these people gobbling pills to forget their surroundings, I know that whatever it is we have down here, I want it to be my life."

Charleston's determined charm was beginning to weigh heavily. After two days, I had the feeling that I was living in a rather gracious mausoleum. But, before I could leave, there was one more thing I had to do, the thing that everyone does when they come to Charleston. And that was to see where it all began to turn: the man-made clump of rock in Charleston Harbor known as Fort Sumter.

If you have grown up in the North, as I have, the Civil War is not one of those events which occupies your mind, any more than, say, the Battle of Hastings. It is merely another of those long dreary chapters one has to get through to pass sixth-grade history. I first began to suspect that southerners might feel somewhat differently during a casual chat in the hotel bar with a barmaid. She was talking about the tribu-

lations Charleston had gone through and mentioned the burning of the city. "Oh," I inquired innocently, "who burned it?" Her smile faded and she pointed right at me.

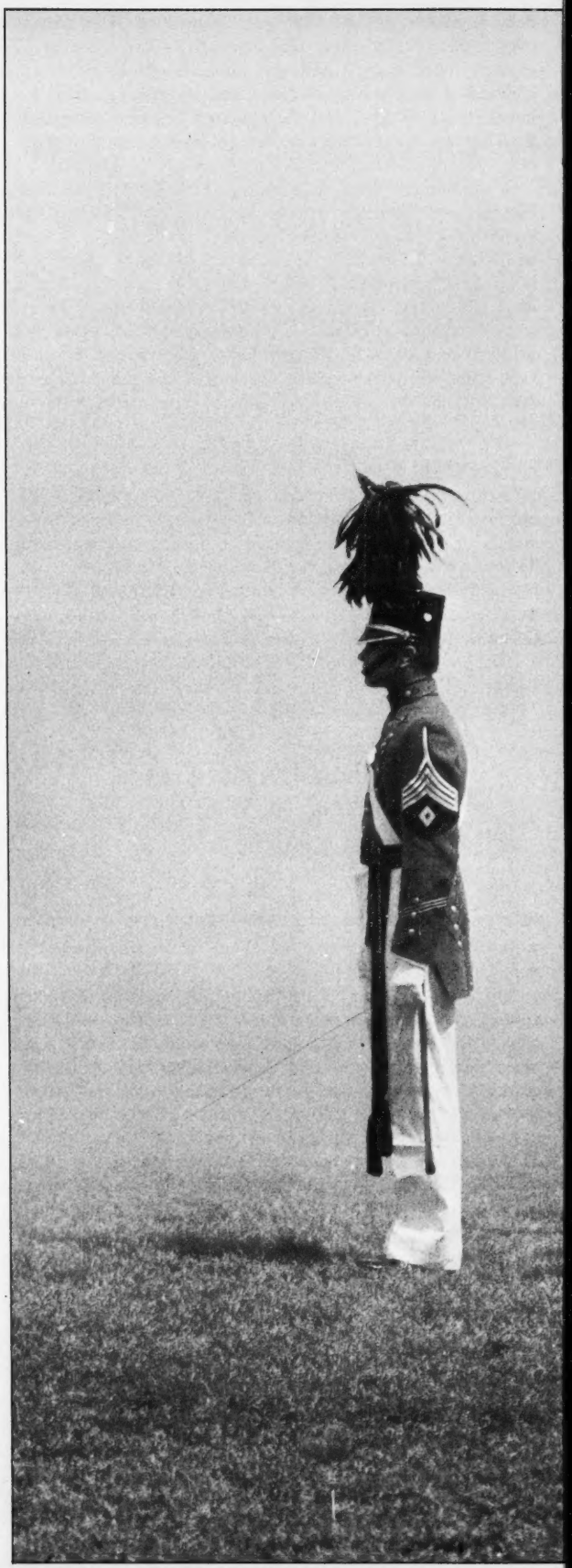
A visit to Fort Sumter revealed that her feelings were not atypical. There is nothing especially notable about Fort Sumter itself, apart from the view it commands of Charleston and the sea beyond. The fort itself is in ruins, not, as I was surprised to learn, from the southern bombardment in the early morning hours of April 12, 1861—the out-gunned and outmanned Federals surrendered after 34 hours—but from the virtually continuous pelting Union artillery gave it between 1863 and 1865. Ever since, the fort has been one of the South's most hallowed shrines. When southerners speak of it, the fact that the War began here is barely mentioned. Instead, they dwell on the heroism of the southern boys who held out those two murderous years, fighting by day, rebuilding by night and finally evacuating the fort only when they were about to be engulfed.

Larry McInerny, a young National Park Service guide, does his best to provide the visitors to Fort Sumter with what he calls "a neutral interpretation of events," but in his accent you can tell where his heart lies. Bill graduated from college a year ago, came back to Charleston and plunged back into his first love, Civil War history. He says he never tires of telling the fort's story three times a day to the boatloads of tourists

"DON'T GET THE WRONG IDEA ABOUT THE MILITARY AND THE SOUTH. IT'S NOT THAT WE ARE BLOOD-THIRSTY SAVAGES OR WARMONGERS, JUST THAT WE RESPECT TRADITION" — A RETIRED AIR FORCE CAPTAIN

who visit. But he likes it best when the people are gone and he is left almost alone in the fort. Then he can go back to his books and read of those glorious battles. Being at Sumter, he says, gets to him once in a while. "I'll walk around the battlements and through the block houses and imagine how it was," he says. "Sometimes, it's almost spooky. Like there are ghosts here. You hear strange sounds." He grins sheepishly. "Maybe I've been out here too long. But, you know, when I think about those soldiers hanging on as long as they did, it gives me goose bumps. That's always been the real wonder to me. Not that we lost the War, but that we held on so long."

But the South did lose, however glorious the defeat. The suicide that began at Sumter had a curious, if psychologically understandable effect on the region. The South became more patriotic, more red, white and blue American than the North. Every war that the country fought thereafter, from Mexico to Vietnam, the South could be counted on to provide more than its share, both in manpower and support. When I was covering the Marines in Chu Lai and Da Nang, I always imagined that there must be some magic valley running from the Carolinas to the Gulf, and that when the country was called to arms, southern boys sprang out of it by the hundreds of thousands. No one seemed to fight as well or as eagerly or with more valor than those southern boys. You wondered, shaking your head watching them, whether perhaps the reason



BRUCE ROBERTS/PHOTO RESEARCHERS

they fought so hard and so unthinkingly wasn't to make up for something that happened a very long time ago.

Now, as I moved through the South, I was finding that, in some ways, the war hadn't ended. They were still battling at what-might-have-beens. "If Jeff Davis had spotted Jackson's genius two years earlier instead of promoting a lot of fatheads as major generals, things might have turned out differently," Bill Garner, a lawyer in Scottsboro, Alabama, told me. And the thing about it was, Garner was serious. I heard it put differently in different places—"If Lee's boys hadn't laid down their arms but gone to guerrilla war instead, hell, we could have pinned down the Yankee army another 20 years," is how one south Georgia cop put it—but the meaning was the same. Southerners could romanticize history, even rewrite it, do everything, in fact, but change it. So powerless, they bathed themselves in it, seeming to take a kind of perverse pleasure from the memory of their worst moment. Charleston was such a city, but hardly the only one in the South. In Montgomery, the Confederacy's battle flag still flies over the statehouse, not so much threatening any longer as pathetic. And when Alabama governors place their hand on the Bible to take their oath of office, they are standing on the very same spot where Jefferson Davis stood to be sworn in as president of the Confederate States of America. A hundred yards or so from the spot, behind the state capitol, Alabamians have erected a gleaming white edifice to house the artifacts of their past. It is a museum of defeat, of swords turned over to conquerors, of flag after flag carried into battle by Alabama boys and never carried away.

"You have to realize there is an enormous desire in the South to redress old grievances," Carter once told a reporter for the *New York Times*, trying to explain why he had been less than outraged over the massacre at My Lai. Rusty Calley was a military man, an officer, fighting for the flag. And now he was in Georgia. Such men were to be protected, however heinous their crimes. There was no good reason for it. You had to be a southerner to truly understand it, and, even then, like Carter, you could never fully explain it. All you knew was it was there, eating at you, making you different.

One night in Jackson, Mississippi, I began to understand it. Out of boredom, I had gone to see *Midway*, the latest World War II shoot-'em-up. The movie had been murdered by the northern critics, and after sitting through ten minutes of it, I could see why. Yet the theater was crowded. Everyone sat there quietly, seemingly engrossed by the action on the screen. During the first two-thirds of the picture, the various battles were not going well for the good ole U.S. of A. Then, just as suddenly, the tide turned and our boys started knocking those Japs out of the sky. "Kaboom," went the first Jap plane in Sensurround, and the people in the theater cheered, not some kids at a Saturday matinee, but adult Mississippians. There went another Nip, and another and another, and then a Jap flattop and, by now, just about everybody was cheering at the top of his lungs. Well, of course, we won the battle, and as the picture was ending, Henry Fonda, playing Chester Nimitz, tried to find the meaning of it all. "Could it be," he said gravely, "that we were better than the Japanese or just luckier?" "Better," answered a loud voice from behind me. There was no doubt, if you lived in the South.

"Don't get the wrong idea about the military and the South," a retired Air Force captain told me at the Citadel. "It's not that we are bloodthirsty savages or warmongers, just that we respect tradition. The military is an important aspect of that tradition. In the South, it's still true that being an officer is synonymous with being a gentleman. And, one more thing. For a lot of southern kids who grew up in small towns, the military was a way out."

The Navy was that way out for a young man growing up in Plains, Ga., named Jimmy Carter. As Carter puts it simply, "My college education would be assured, no small consideration during those Depression days when the chance of a family-financed college education seemed slight." So, off to Annapolis and twelve years in the Navy he went, in every sense a classic southern story.

The parade grounds were quiet and deserted the day I came to visit the Citadel. June Week was recently completed, and the remainder of the 1976-member Corps of Cadets was away on "summer furlough." Come the fall, the quadrangle would once again throb with the sounds of cadets drilling back and forth, back and forth, hour after pointless hour. The drill is part of the Citadel's tradition. Indeed, virtually everything that happens at the Citadel is described in terms of some tradition. There is some grumbling from the younger faculty members but on the whole it is taken very seriously.

Traditions at the Citadel *are*.

Parents send their sons to the Citadel, I was informed, "to get character—whatever that is," a professor added with a smile.

What the professor said sounded cynical, but the tone was not. Though he could be critical of his school and the place of his rearing (he was, of course, a southerner), he was still admiring of many of the Citadel's ways, if only because in large measure they were *his* ways. "You won't quote me, will you?" After I assured him I would not, he settled back easily, put his feet on the desk and commenced to do something southerners love to do—talk, especially about the South.

"There's no mystery about the South and the military," he said. "It's a way of bettering oneself. In the South, the officers of the militia and the regular services have always come from the better classes. And, if they weren't in the better classes to start with, being an officer put them there. You take a look at all the public figures in the 19th-century South. They all had some sort of military background.

"Southerners have a lot of mish-mash ideas running around in their heads. So many of them are contradictory. They want to balance the budget and they want to spend more on national defense. They think there is too much government and yet they favor more military. You can't figure it out. I've never tried to.

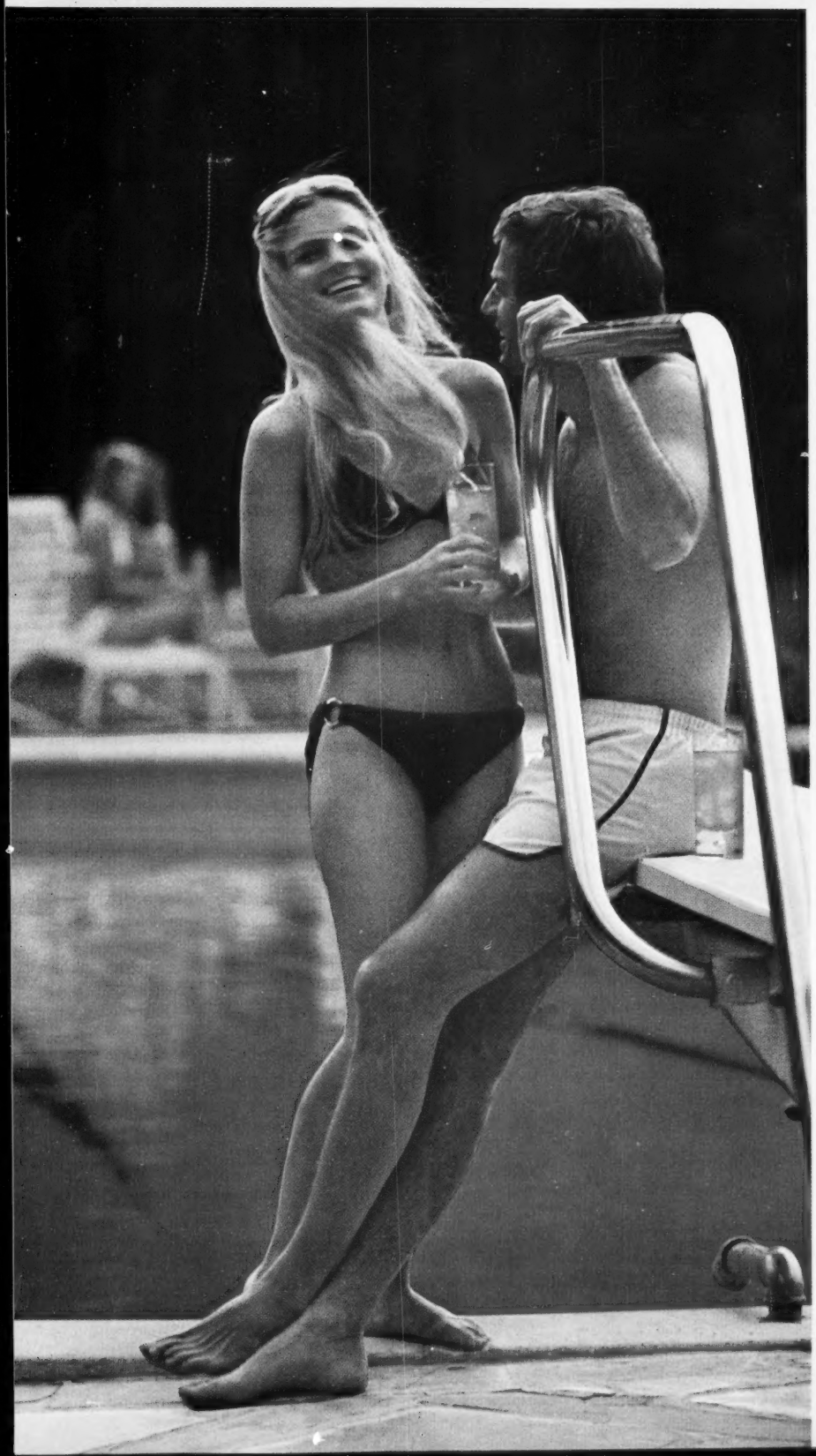
"If you live in the South, it's important that you fit in. You don't want to do anything that will make you too different than anyone else in town. You see it here. A kid can be smart but he doesn't want to seem too intellectual, and he especially doesn't want to seem like a grind. Being too intellectual is identified with pretention and if there is one thing a southerner can't stand, it's pretention. After all, one day you're going to be leaving here. You're going to go back home and belong to the local Kiwanis, serve in the reserve and be a town booster. You've got to remember that. You've got to be constantly recertifying your credentials as a good old boy, somebody who can get along with anybody."

"You mean like Carter?" I asked.

"Well, sort of like Carter," he replied. "He doesn't really carry off the good old boy act very well. But you can tell there's still some of it in him. It's in everybody.

"Loyalty is a real word in the South," he continued. "The worst thing that can be said against you is that you're not loyal. Of course, it's easy to get the meaning of that word twisted. If you don't agree with someone above you, they can say that you're not loyal. That's a lot of crap, but you hear it more in the South than you do elsewhere. Loyalty—and fun-

CAMPARI INSTEAD.



You're having a long hard day around the pool and you're ready to have your usual favorite summer drink.

But today you feel like making waves. So you do something different.You have Campari & Orange Juice instead.

A long, cool drink of Campari & Orange Juice makes a satisfying light drink around the pool or patio. It's perfect before lunch or dinner.

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Instead of your usual drink, try this... pour a jigger (1 1/2 oz.) of Campari over ice in a tall glass. Fill with Orange Juice and enjoy!

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damentalist religion has a lot to do with it, too—leads to a particularly southern belief in absolutes. It's like truth is a tangible thing, something you can build a fence around.

"There's a kind of naive belief that our side stands for good, truth and the right. That's why we supported Vietnam for so long. Even the Calley thing. The first reaction here was 'he didn't do it.' After it became obvious that he did do it, the reaction switched to,' Well, if he did it, he must have had a good reason.' Even Nixon hung on down here longer than he did anywhere else. Not that people particularly loved Nixon, just that he was the president, and we are taught that presidents can never do any wrong. What finally tore it for him, in the South, I think, was not the break-in or the cover-up or all the lies but when people got a look at those transcripts and found out he was using all that profanity. That killed him down here."

When we finished talking, the professor said, "You can see why I didn't want you to quote me. I've got to be a good old boy, too."

I made my goodbyes and walked outside across the parade field. In the distance, I could see the Citadel's huge water tower, freshly painted from a few years ago. Once, I was told, a huge Stars and Bars had been emblazoned on that tower. But some of the black cadets had objected, and so down Jeff Davis' flag came for a final time. Admitting the blacks had been trauma enough. Now there were rumors that the Citadel would soon be compelled to admit, yes, women. It would be hard for the old guard to take. But they still had their traditions. Every Friday afternoon during the school term, Charlestonians by the thousands turned out to watch the Corps of Cadets, brass buttons glistening, come by in dress parade. And as the cadets passed in review a final time, with the sun setting, the crowd, as they had for a hundred years, broke into a thunderous cheer. The band was playing Dixie.

THE CITY TOO BUSY TO HATE

The Southern Airways jet can cover the distance between Charleston and Atlanta in just over an hour. It is like being on board a time machine. You leave a place living determinedly in the past. You get off in one that seems to be doing its best to forget it ever had one.

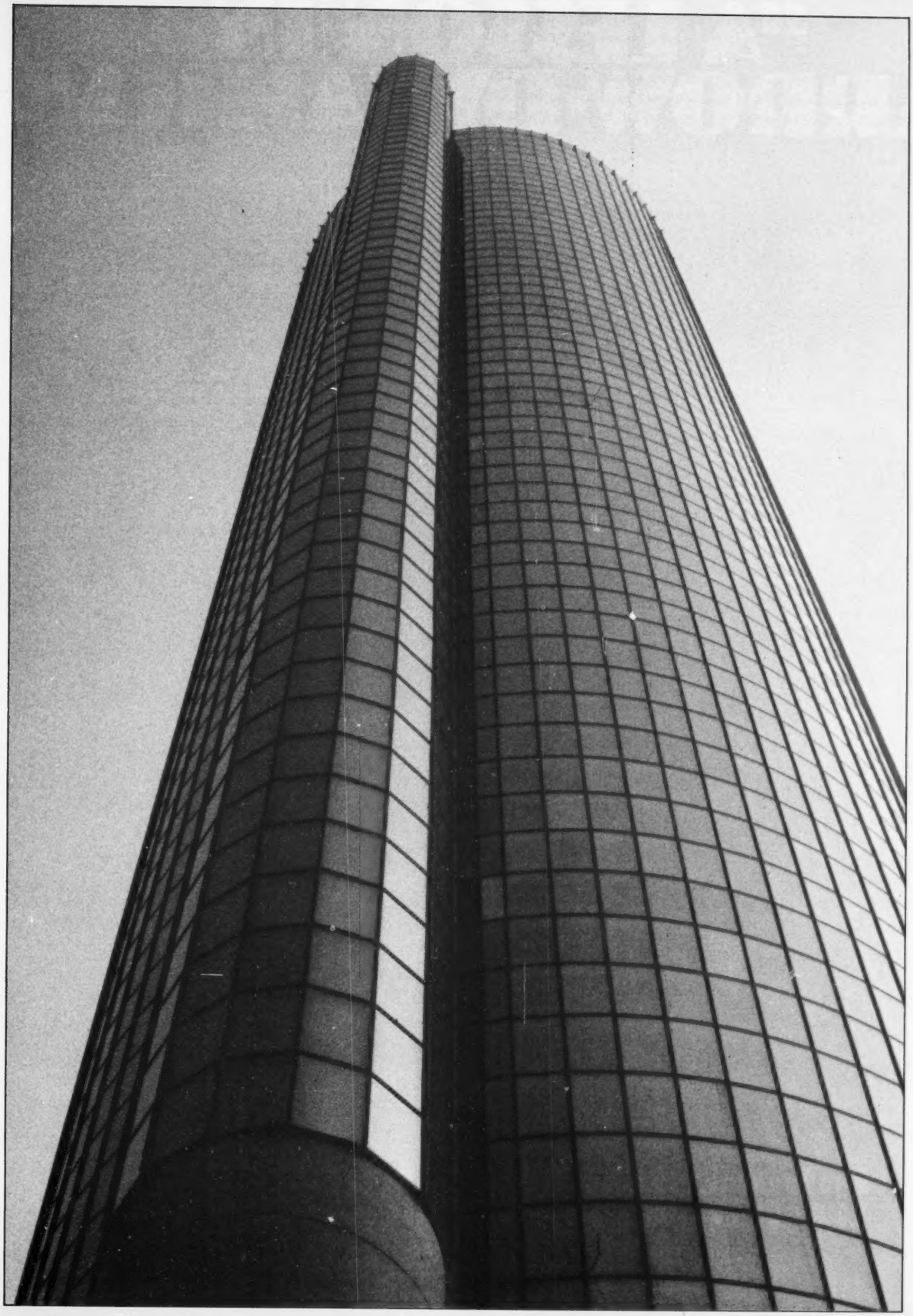
Atlanta is a southern city merely by accident of geography. Everything else about it is relentlessly northern: the pace, the crowding, the traffic, the alienation, even, it seems, most of the people—an incredible 80 percent of whom were born somewhere other than Atlanta. If Atlanta is the most "northern" city in the South, it may well be the most self-congratulatory city in the country. To hear Atlantans talk, everything about their city is the best and most wonderful anywhere. The best nightlife, the best hotels (including a couple of futuristic numbers designed by John Portman, one of them, at seventy stories, the tallest in the world), the best food, the most charm, the fastest growth, the easiest tolerance, on and on through the whole list of superlatives, very few of which, as it happens, are true. "Now don't you say anything bad about Atlanta," a big real estate developer told me, emphasizing the message with what seemed to be a more than friendly slap on the back.

Boosterism has seized Atlanta by the throat and it shows no signs of letting go. Hyperbole is the natural mode of southern expression (listen to a speech sometime by Jimmy Carter, if you don't believe it), but Atlantans have raised the art to a new standard. They are, they say, in their most oft-repeated hyperbole, "the city too busy to hate."

Atlanta wasn't always so. Twenty years ago, Atlanta was a medium-sized, stagnant, rather sleepy southern city, in much the same way that Montgomery, Alabama, is today. The society was as tightly stratified as Charleston; the patterns of segregation were bad or worse than any in the South. Coca-Cola was not the only major industry in town, but the only one. Then, in 1961, a businessman named Ivan Allen was elected mayor, and the town began to change. Capitalizing on its location, which made it a natural transportation hub for the region (the joke in the South goes: "Whether you go to heaven or hell, you're going to have to change planes in Atlanta"), Allen and other prominent members of Atlanta's business establishment formed "Forward Atlanta," a public relations and promotion program to lure northern business. Since then, Forward Atlanta has pumped nearly $4 million into national advertising. The results have been astonishing. Today, according to Thomas Hamall, executive vice-president of the Chamber of Commerce, nearly 450 of the Fortune 500 companies maintain offices in Atlanta. Every year between 1961 and 1975, Atlanta added an average of 30,000 new jobs—triple Forward Atlanta's original goals. The city, which started off billing itself "the greatest city in the South," switched to "the next great city in the country " and now calls itself "the next great city in the world," is today the third largest convention center in the country, and aims shortly to become number one. The Atlanta airport is the second busiest in the world, and there is talk of building another. Hamall, naturally, is delighted by this growth, for he typifies it. A native Floridian, Hamall has spent most of his life in the North. Since coming to Atlanta two years ago from the Midwest, he has become one of the town's movers and shakers."We've been totally absorbed into the community," he beams. "Gee, two of my kids have already been elected to office in their local high school." Hamall is also typical of new Atlantans, especially white Atlantans, in another way: he lives in the suburbs, nearly thirty miles from town. For while Atlanta was becoming a big city, it was also becoming a black one. Today, 60 percent of the people living inside the city limits are black, including the mayor, Maynard Jackson, who describes himself as "the biggest, blackest, fattest mayor in America," which is one hyperbole that may be true.

The city's increasing blackness is one of those things the Chamber of Commerce doesn't talk about. Instead, I am told how "forward-looking" Atlanta has always been about race relations, in no small part because getting along is good for business. The story Atlantans like to tell about why they "did the right thing" about race reveals a lot about the nature of the town. It seems in the first days of integration, Morris Rich, the head of Rich's department stores, gathered his employees and held up two five dollar bills. "One of these bills," he told his employees, "was spent by a white woman in the lingerie department. The other five dollar bill was spent by a black lady at the lunch counter. Now can anyone tell me the difference between these two five dollar bills?" It was a lesson Atlanta never forgot.

Of course, Atlanta had other things going for it: a complex of eight, nearly all black colleges, for one thing,



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which each year turned out thousands of new members of the black middle class. And then there was Martin Luther King. "Martin was a home town boy here," one white businessman said to me. "When you know somebody as a person rather than as a public figure, it makes change a whole lot easier." The Southern Christian Leadership Conference that King led is today a shadow of its former self, and the most noticeable evidence of Dr. King's legacy is a souvenir stand built next to his grave, on the outskirts of downtown Atlanta, that, among other things, sells "I Have a Dream" T-shirts and official Martin Luther King ballpoint pens. The gravesite itself is a reflection of Atlanta: modern, a little tacky (the only flower present the day I went to visit it was a plastic orange rose) and surrounded by excavations.

Martin Luther King's real legacy is subtler and more profound. It is seeing affluent black men and women, dressed to the nines, turning out for a ball at Atlanta's newest and most luxurious hotel, The Peachtree Plaza. It is hearing Ben Brown, who once shared a cell with Dr. King and now sits in the Georgia legislature, say with a smile, "The shiftless, no-account blacks all went north. The blacks with ambition stayed here." It is sitting in a downtown movie theater, as I did one night, looking around, discovering you are the only white in the place and feeling relaxed in a way one could never feel in a similar situation in New York. Whatever the reason, blacks and whites do get along in Atlanta in a way that they don't seem to in the North.

BEN BROWN, WHO ONCE SHARED A CELL WITH DR. KING, NOW SITS IN THE GEORGIA LEGISLATURE AND SAYS WITH A SMILE, "THE SHIFTLESS NO-ACCOUNT BLACKS ALL WENT NORTH. THE BLACKS WITH AMBITION STAYED HERE"

"Well, we grew up with 'em," is the explanation white southerners always give you. I heard that refrain often in Atlanta, as I did wherever I went in the South, including Plains. "All my playmates were black," Carter has recorded. "We hunted, fished, explored, worked and slept together. We ground sugar cane, plowed mules, pruned watermelons, dug and bedded sweet potatoes, mopped cotton, stacked peanuts, cut stovewood, pumped water, fixed fences, fed chickens, picked velvet beans and hauled cotton to the gin together. . . . We ran, swam, rode horses, drove wagons and floated on rafts together. Even misbehaved together and shared the same punishments. We built and lived in the same tree houses and played cards and ate at the same table." But, Carter adds, "we never went to school or church together."

It is easy, of course, to overromanticize and simplify race relations; it was hardly all marigolds and roses. The closeness that developed between people was, in large measure, a function of the small town. One of the reasons Carter, for instance, had so many black friends as a child is that, in Plains, there were few white boys to play with. And where the small town culture did not exist, the relationship quickly began to deteriorate.

So it was in Atlanta. Privately, several of the white businessmen and politicians I talked to complained that, with the coming of Jackson, the town, if not going immediately to hell, was taking the first steps down the road to ruin. They pointed at little things, like the garbage collection. Under Allen, and his white successor, there had been collections three times a week, and the garbage men fetched the trash from the back yard. Now, as an economy measure, collections had been reduced to once a week and a homeowner had to place the trash curbside. "When we turned this government over to him," said one prominent politician, using a revealing turn of phrase, "it was a going concern. All he had to do was run it, watch over it. Maynard's become a damn innovator. He thinks city government is some sort of civil rights movement."

Atlanta, though, has brought most of its problems on itself. By choosing to grow, Atlanta had fundamentally altered itself. People didn't know their neighbors, who, chances were, had probably moved in the month before. Instead of back-yard fences to talk over, there were now high-rise apartments. Atlanta, in short, was losing its southernness.

In Atlanta, the consequences of growth were never seriously considered. Unlike Charleston and Montgomery, it had the benefit of being a new town. What little grace there was in town came to an end in 1865, with William Tecumseh Sherman's radical plan of urban renewal. "Sherman is the best thing that ever happened to this town," says one wealthy investor, with only mild exaggeration. As a result, there were few tears—and even less thinking—when the bulldozers began pulling down whole chunks of what had been downtown Atlanta. These days, about the only memory of the past are small plaques attached to the sides of some of the new skyscrapers, proclaiming that on this site something once stood.

All of this was running through my head when Beecham Carr, one of the heirs to the *Atlanta Constitution* fortune, stopped by to pick me up for lunch. Carr is young and blond and very preppy, and very much imbued with the sense of history and responsibility that comes from being very rich and very preppy. In recent months, he has devoted most of his energies to preserving the old Fox Theatre, the first such preservation effort to get off the ground in Atlanta, and for which a number of Atlantans think Carr is a little tetched. So far, though, the Fox project is a success, and Carr thinks—"it's more of a wish, really"—that it might inspire similar endeavors by other Atlantans. As we drove out to his private club, I expressed my worries about the growth mania and Carr readily agreed. "Growth is a religion here," he said. "The growth of Atlanta became a cult in itself. No one dared suggest that there was anything wrong with growth. There were a lot of bright young men around here in the early sixties who thought they were going to make their fortunes in real estate speculation—this whole town was one big real estate speculation for a while—and a lot of them did. Now, some of those very same bright young men have lost their shirts."

Atlanta itself has not lost its shirt—yet. But it has lost something infinitely more precious, that sense of what it is and where it is coming from. Carr, for instance, remarked that in the department of a bank where he had once worked, there were thirty-five employees, three of whom were from Atlanta. As he put it: "It was just sort of assumed that if you were working with big money, you weren't from Atlanta." You were, of course, from the North, where Atlanta, like the rest of the South, still looks for the money and the expertise that will mean its growth. Much of the financing for Atlanta's spanking new "Omni International," a cavernous complex housing a hotel, apartments, offices, a sports arena, boutiques, a public ice-skating rink and "The World of Sid and Marty Kroft," the world's first and only high-rise amusement

CULVER PHOTOS

EWING

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The old Atlanta has disappeared in a tide of modern boosterism, from the glass and steel skyline to the carefully groomed young Good Ole Boys to candles and sweatshirts trading on Dr. King's dream.

park, came from northern banks and financiers, among them David Rockefeller and the Ford Foundation. There is always a handy explanation for looking north: the South is poor. But, as the South is enriched, that excuse wears increasingly thin. Instead, developers like Tom Cousins, the mastermind of Omni International, insist that it makes no difference where the money comes from, so long as it's green. Says Cousins: "I don't think of myself as a southerner. I think of myself as a citizen of the United States."

Only in Atlanta will you hear such heresy publicly professed, and to a northerner of all people. Strange, but it bothered me. In spite of myself, I was becoming protective of the South, the old South of small towns and country cooking and easygoing people. The infestation of Colonel Sanders and Holiday Inns—the natural climax of which was a city like Atlanta, all glitter and no soul—could not be stopped, but, dammit, it ought to be delayed. They already had the North and California, why did they have to swallow up the South, I mentally drawled, thinking it. I had to get out of this place, back to the South of my imagination. I left in the middle of the night. As I drove out of town, the streets were barren of people. The only noise was from a rumble of a bulldozer.

"GOD IS A YANKEE"

And so I went to Nashville, and found that John Portman had struck again. A lot is new in Nashville, and it is not just Mr. Portman's hotel. The city, like the music that made it famous, has become slicker and less countrified in its ways. Blue jeans and denim shirts have given way to bright polyesters. These days, country stars, would-be and otherwise, make their way down to the "Alamo" to be outfitted in bicentennial satins and rhinestones, and, if they long for a touch of the real thing, like one magazine writer from New York, a pair of Spanish goatskin Lucchese boots, just like John Wayne wears, at $177 a copy. In the hotel lobby, these new southerners, many of whom spoke with suspicious-sounding accents, sashayed to and fro like so many pastel-colored easter eggs.

If I had come to Nashville looking for a taste of traditional southern culture, I was not to find it. Oh, the Opry is still here, booked solid through November, but the old Ryman Auditorium, where Roy Acuff and Minnie Pearl and Grandpa Jones held forth for fifty years, has given way to a squeaky-clean new Opry House, set down in the middle of "Opryland," a 369-acre complex of musical shows, jungle habitats, restaurants, gift shops and amusement rides. About the only trace of the "old" Grand Ole Opry is one of Roy Acuff's fiddles, which is preserved, under glass, in the new Grand Ole Opry's lobby.

Friday night at the Opry now is almost as sterile as its surroundings. Outside, the parking lot is jammed with, from the looks of the license plates, cars from every state in the nation. Inside the packed house, the audience, well-scrubbed and white, sits attentively, almost reverentially, as one "beloved" performer after another struts his stuff. Backstage, C. W. McCall, a former Omaha adman now on his way to country immortality, explains the appeal: "It's honesty," he says. "Telling a story in no uncertain terms so people can understand it . . . sort of like Jimmy Carter."

Now I know how my colleagues and I all went wrong. Instead of listening to Hubert Humphrey, we should have been hearing Johnny Cash. For a moment, suffused in that blaze of recognition, the possibilities begin opening up. "And now, ladies and gentlemen, from the stage of the WSM Grand Ole Opry, it's that sensation you've all been waiting for, Jiiimeee Carter!"

The crowd roars, the spotlight comes center stage and there he is, and, mama, he's singing our song . . .

If I evah lie to you . . .
woo-woo
If I evah mislead you . . .
uh-uh
If I evah deceive you . . .

oh no
Then I don't deserve
ah ha
To be your president.

CHORUS (ethereal-sounding female voices)
Just as good
And as kind
And as decent
And as loving
As our Jimmy.

Sad to say, tonight's show at the Opry is not quite as inspired. I left well before the performance was over and sat outside the Roy Acuff Museum, drinking a Coke, smoking a cigarette and suddenly feeling $177 poorer. I looked up and noticed that there were two Opryland girls staring at me from a few feet away. It had to be the boots, I thought. But then I noticed their whisk brooms and their dust pans. They were waiting for me to finish the Coke and the cigarette. Not a speck of dirt must intrude on Opryland's cement history.

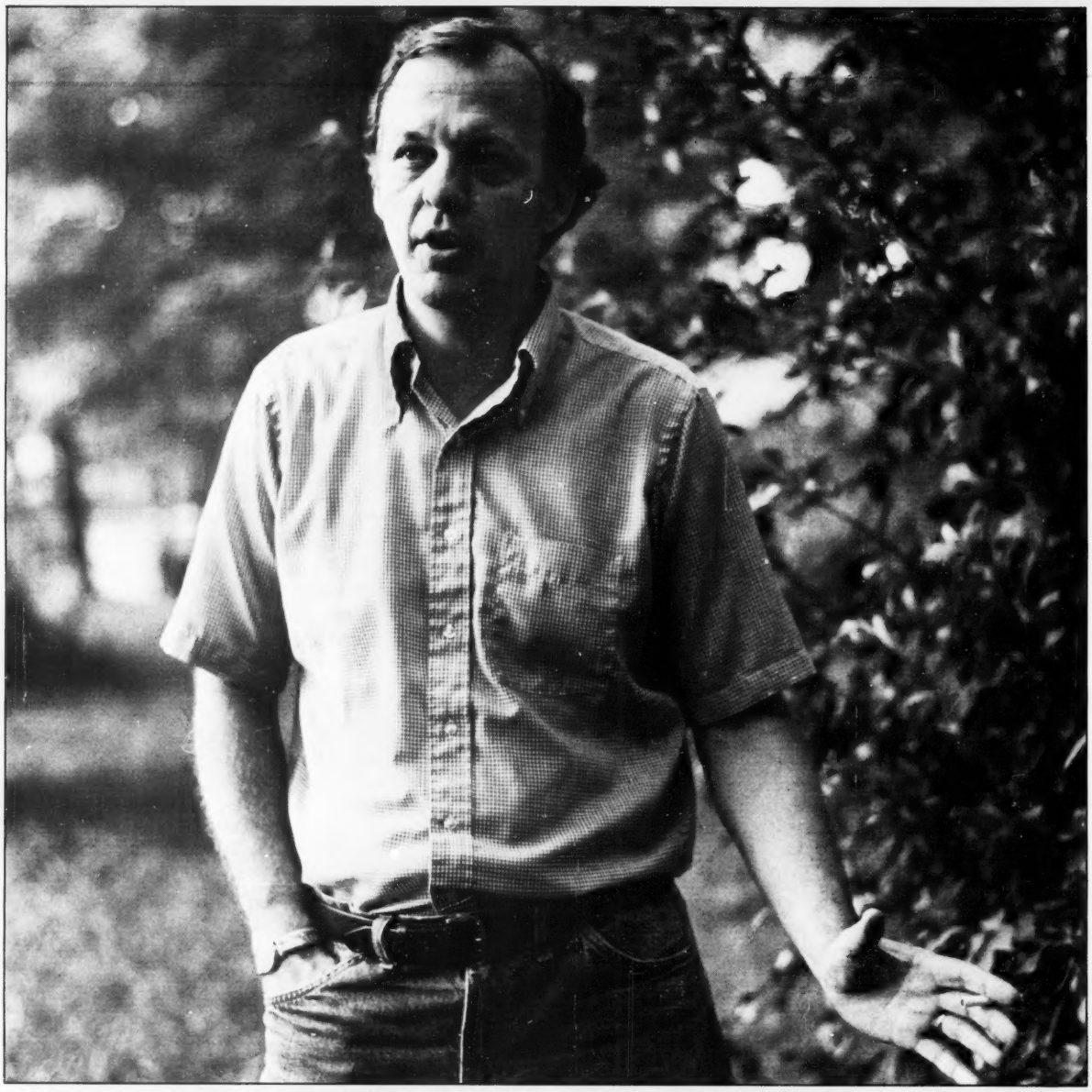
"The Americanization of Dixie," John Egerton, the southern writer, calls it, in his fine and little-noticed book of the same name. But, as Egerton sees the smoothing and sanitizing—the plain northernizing—of the land where he grew up, the process cuts both ways. There is also "the southernization of America": CB radios, country music, the denim look, racism, the southern strategy of Richard Nixon, all the South's affectations and vices and none of its soul.

The Americanization of Dixie is a gloomy, depressing piece of work, like the phenomenon it describes. And the man who wrote it looks the same: sad, baleful eyes, a posture permanently in a slump, but not a man who has lost his sense of irony, his humor or that improbable flicker of romantic optimism that keep southerners going. He was worried, though, when I saw him, worried that Jimmy Carter would hasten the Americanization on its way. "Well, I guess you all are going to accept us now," he said with the slightest trace of a smile, as we sat down to talk in his cluttered Nashville study. "That depends," I answered with the same smile, then asked the meaning of the framed needlepoint motto that hung over his desk. "God is a Yankee," it said. "Well," he said, "I figure that's gotta be true one of two ways. First, if God is a Yankee, it sure would explain everything we've had to go through down here. And, second, if he is a Yankee, you all are going to have hell to pay for what you've done." From then on, we were totally at ease.

Egerton had been born in Atlanta, but his father, a traveling salesman, had taken the family to Cadiz, Kentucky, when John was a child. After college, young Egerton knocked around in the civil rights movement, worked for the Southern Regional Council, wrote books and is now doing his best to make a living as a freelancer. Like the best southern writers, he writes about what he knows best: home.

"The rearing Carter had was very typical," he said. "The ordinary father, caught up in business, not thinking much about the larger things around him, and the good, saintly mother, Miz Lilian, always prodding her boy to see something more in the world. If you find a good man in the South, a white man who does the right thing on race, you always find that the reason for that good ultimately resides in another *person*. It's a theme you constantly come across in Lillian Smith's writings.

"My mother was sort of like that," he reminisced. "I'll never forget her, in the way, I guess, Carter will never forget his mother. When I was six or seven, I remember, my mother took me to visit an old black woman who worked for us and was sick. The lady had a son about my age. I stayed out in the yard to play with him. We were wrestling around and he fell and cut himself on some roofing tin. I remember seeing his blood in the dust. It looked just like grape juice. My mother came out and picked him up and took care of him. On the way



EWING

John Egerton, southern writer: "Dr. King liberated *us* just as much as he liberated the blacks."

home, she didn't say a thing to me. Then, when we got home, she beat the shit out of me."

He laughed at the memory, then went back to Carter. "He's made up his mind on racial equality. When a white southerner gets his head straight on that issue, you can bank on him in ways you can't bank on other people. It's been said, said by a lot of Negroes, in fact, that the only white man who comes close to understanding what racial justice means is a white southerner. He not only knows it instinctively, he feels it in his soul.

"You don't know how terrible that burden of racism was for a white man in the South. That's what Carter means when he talks about Dr. King and the Voting Rights Act, how it was the greatest thing to ever happen to the South. It was—for white southerners. Of course, blacks have felt a lot of changes but, in so many important ways, housing, jobs, the whole thing, they are still as oppressed as they ever were. Dr. King liberated *us* just as much as he liberated the blacks."

Egerton sat there a few moments, saying nothing, as if he knew what he wanted to say but was figuring out how best to say it to an outsider. He came back at it slowly. "You have to realize about the South," he said. "When you're a white southerner, you're terribly torn about this place. One part of you is always defensive and defensive for a reason. We are different from the rest of the country and a lot of those differences come over terrible things, race, prejudice, narrow-mindedness. But there's another part, too.

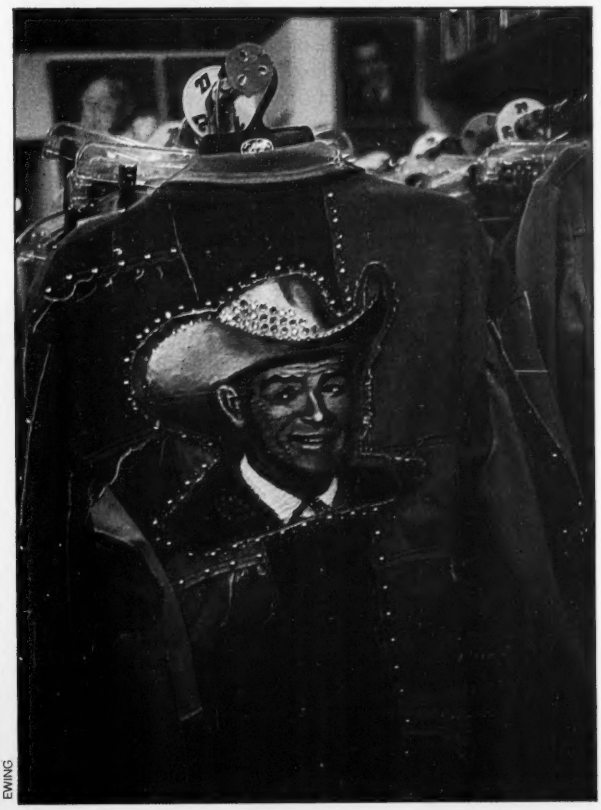
"I'd run into a lot of people who were incredibly hostile about the South, bigoted, like Charlie Morgan said about the ACLU. They talked about all the things I didn't like about the South, but that's all they talked about. They didn't see anything else. They didn't understand the South at all, didn't want to. And I found myself becoming very defensive about the South. I slipped into that preservationist attitude. It was as if I was there representing the South against the people who thought it was all bad. And I was saying things like the South

was not only different from the North but, in a lot of ways, better. So there I was part of it: that old superiority-inferiority complex southerners have, and that runs through your personality like the San Andreas Fault."

"But what does Carter have to do with any of that?" I insisted. "Well, everything, dammit," John said. "Those same feelings are in him, too. Well, there is more to it than that." And, finally, John Egerton came to what was bothering him. "Even when I felt lowest, during those days in Mississippi, when kids were getting killed, I knew I could never leave here," he said. "Everything that was happening was so wrong, but it just centered on one thing. And I thought that if we could turn that one thing around, we would have it all. Now, I don't know. Don't get me wrong. I feel really good about Carter, but what worries me is everything that is going to happen to the South because of him. The South is going to become a fad. I'll be seeing more and more Yankee reporters. It's going to be like the hoola-hoop. We are going to be *accepted* because of Jimmy Carter. But it isn't working out right. We're giving up the virtues and keeping the vices. The thing that I've always feared is about to happen: the reunion is going to take place, but it'll happen on someone else's terms. Your terms. We're sort of like the blacks. The white man finally got around to offering them integration, but on his terms. Now a lot of blacks don't know whether they like those terms. Same with the South. The North is saying to us, you got Carter, so come on in. Just one thing, though. You got to borrow your money from northern banks, get your know-how from the North, get your way of thinking from the North. Come on in, you're really saying, and be like us."

"Well, what did you expect, John?" I said. "We won the War. And, besides, God is a Yankee, remember?"

"We're all getting to be Yankees," he said sadly.



EWING

LOCK, STOCK AND PEANUT BARREL

There is no way to rush to Plains, Georgia. For the moment at least, planes don't fly there (for the very good reason that Plains, population 683, lacks even a sufficiently long stretch of cow pasture to accommodate them), and the interstate that comes down from Atlanta seems almost to go out of its way to miss it. So, when you come to Plains, you have to take the turnoff at Vienna (Jody Powell's home town, and pronounced VY-anna, which explains why Carter mystified a lot of people at the United Nations when he talked about the International Atomic Energy Agency at "VY-anna, Austria") and drive down 40 or 50 miles of two-lane road through country that does a credible impersonation of Tobacco Road. When I complained of this state of affairs to a local farmer, he explained, "Befo Mr. Jimmy and all, people figured if you was coming down to Plains, then you musn't be in too much of an all-fired hurry."

Through the years, people have taken advantage of Sumter County's out-of-the-wayness. In 1863, for instance, the Confederacy, with thousands of Union prisoners on its hands and nowhere else to keep them, thought Sumter County was a fine place for a prison camp. At first, they wanted to build it in Plains, not far from the Carter house, but local people objected, and the site was finally moved 20 miles north to a little town called Andersonville. The prison was designed to house 10,000 prisoners. It ended up housing as many as 32,000 men, who were left in the Georgia sun without sufficient shelter, water or food. The attrition rate was murderous. In 14 months, more than 12,000 men died from disease, malnutrition or exposure. So heavy was the death toll that the gravediggers could not keep up with the load. In the end, they dug long trenches and laid the bodies in, shoulder to shoulder, which is how they lie today, gravestone upon gravestone, acre upon acre. At the conclusion of the War, Captain Henry Wirz, the camp's commandant, was arrested, tried and summarily hung before an approving crowd of Washingtonians on November 10, 1865.

Today, there are few reminders of Sumter's dark past, or even of the civil rights movement that found Sumter County and neighboring Albany resistant in a way some of the black belt Mississippi counties never were. The way Martin Luther King is talked of these days—which is rarely—you would think that he was merely passing through town one day, and, Albany, being hospitable, put him up for a few nights in the local jail. Over at Koinonia Farm, the old interracial co-op down the road from Plains, there hasn't been a bombing or a boycott in years. Betty Jordan, the widow of Clarence Jordan, the Baptist minister who founded Koinonia, talks of the bad times reluctantly. Yes, she says, the boycott made life tough. No one in town would sell them fertilizer, or gas, or anything else they needed to keep the farm going, and so, for a while, they had to plain quit farming. But the troublemakers, the

people who blew up the food stand and let the pigs out on the road, fired shots at the trucks and kept the residents up the whole night long with their phone calls. They, she insists, were outsiders, not even from the state. Local people, she says, were just afraid to help. Did she ask Jimmy Carter for help? No, she hadn't thought of that.

As it turned out, Carter was having problems of his own. The White Citizens Council was in full bloom in Plains, and it had managed to sign up every businessman in town save Carter. Two organizers appeared at Carter's door, one a Baptist preacher, the other the chief of police, and importuned him to join. He refused. They offered to waive the $5 monthly dues. He still refused. And so they boycotted him. When that didn't work, they finally left him alone.

It was not so easy at Koinonia. But, for Betty Jordon, those days are a fading memory now. At 63, she has lost none of her vigor, or her suspicion of outsiders, North or South. "We had a great deal of faith in what we were doing," she says. "Southerners are the only people who can really make a witness in the South, so we decided to stay and give it a try. Oh, folks squirmed and hollered, but, after the Supreme Court made its decision, we got it out of our system. In the North, whitie and blackie don't know each other. Blacks are an issue in the North. Here, they are people. Go on up and talk to the Morgans. They're black people. You'll see."

"I'M THE WORM-FARMING CARTER, LARGEST WORM FARMER IN THE WORLD. WORMS ARE GOOD, CLEAN BUSINESS" — HUGH CARTER, JIMMY'S COUSIN

She was right, naturally. People did get on as people, even in Sumter County. Take Maisy Morgan, for instance. She and her husband Carranza owned their own farm in Smithville. It wasn't much of a place, 125 sandy, clay-bottom acres of corn and peanuts, and, to make ends meet, Carranza had a part-time job as a school bus driver, but it was theirs, and always had been. And, before they had owned it, Carranza's daddy had. And before him, his great-granddaddy, "a slave boy," as Mr. Morgan put it, had farmed it as a sharecropper. They were in their sixties now, with one of their sons in Atlanta, another in nearby Americus, working as a fireman, but they weren't about to leave or stop working. Carranza hadn't had much trouble with whites—"I've been a registered voter since I was a young man," he boasted—though, he admitted, "things have changed considerable." He could ask a white man for a favor anytime, he said, and so could they from him. That morning, in fact, he had butchered a hog for two of his white neighbors. Once, they had lent him some tools. Yes, he knew "Mr. Jimmy," had even sold him some peanuts once, and Mr. Jimmy had treated him "real fair." People like Mr. Jimmy made him like it here. "Out in the rural, children are more mannerlike," he said. "They don't have so many habits of doing wrong things. People are more friendly and neighborly than in the North. Of course, Dr. King, he made a real difference. You can git on a bus now and sit where you wanna sit."

People in Sumter County seem to be on their best behavior these days, and, after a year of reporters asking questions, they know what the press wants to hear. Despite the modest prosperity Carter's candidacy has brought to his home county, life is far from easy here. The land gives up its riches only reluctantly. Americus, the county seat with a population of 18,000, has not experienced the kind of growth that has occurred in Albany less than 60 miles away, in large part because Americus chose not to grow, fearing the kind of social change that growth would inevitably bring. As a result, Albany has most of the new industry in the area, along with unions, strikes and a higher crime rate.

Plains is different only because it is smaller and blacker, and, of course, home, or so the sign in town says, of "the next President of the United States." Plains is prettier than most towns its size, and the Carters can take the credit. After all, they virtually own the town. Nor is their dominance unusual in the South. An Alabamian joked to me that, in the little town where he grew up, one family owned everything in sight, just as the Carters did in Plains. Unlike Plains, the family in this town had a competitor in the feed store business. Fortunately, though, he died, and his widow was married off to one of the sons of the town's leading family. "There was some talk," the Alabamian said, "that the Justice Department was going to investigate the marriage for violation of the Sherman Anti-Trust Act."

James Earl Carter, Jimmy's father, brought the family its prosperity. He died of cancer in 1953. About the kindliest thing you will hear about him in Plains these days, at least from a non-Carter, is that Mr. Earl was a hard worker and a shrewd businessman. Obviously, a lot of Mr. Earl's industriousness rubbed off on his eldest son. By the time Jimmy was five, he was selling boiled peanuts from a stand in town. At nine, he had saved enough money to purchase five bales of cotton at the then all-time low price of five cents a pound. Jimmy stored the cotton until the price climbed to eighteen cents, then sold it for a modest killing. With that money, he bought five houses from the estate of a recently deceased undertaker, then rented them out for a grand total of $16.50 per month.

The story of Jimmy, his peanuts and his houses has become part of the hagiography of Plains. Folks love to cite it as an example of the brightness that would hold Jimmy in good stead in later years when it came to collecting delegates. There is an irresistible charm to the story, as there is to all the tales of the barefoot boy growing up and making good, and that is exactly the trouble. The stories have been told and retold so often by so many people to so many reporters that they have lost whatever meaning they might have had. Plains itself, in fact, is not so much a town anymore as a Hollywood movie set, where the people never forget their lines or the cue cards or to smile at strangers. After all, it's good for Jimmy, and what is good for Mr. Jimmy is good for Plains.

I finally gave up trying to extract any meaning from Plains, Ga. The town had simply OD'd on publicity. Hugh Carter, Jimmy's cousin—"I'm the worm-farming Carter, largest worm farmer in the world. Worms are a good, clean business"—finally brought the situation home when I stopped in to visit and said, "I guess I'm about the 400th reporter you've talked to." "No," said Mr. Hugh, "you're about the 900th."

The conclusion was inescapable. If you went to the South in search of Jimmy Carter, Plains was by now the last place that could explain him. It didn't matter much, though. The 1941 class of Plains High School was having a reunion. The genuine article was coming home.

The Light at it's Brightest.

Olé ELO. Their greatest hits from 1972 to 1976. Electric Light Orchestra. On United Artists Records and Tapes.

"American Chic is the Country Cousin who came to the city, the drop-in guest who stayed for a candlelight dinner."

Photo by Eddie Adams

"It has drifted in from gold mines and cattle ranges, from wharves, barracks and boiler rooms. It is fluid, soft, supple, slithery, sexy and unstuffy."

For all its newfound authority, American fashion is still a twelve billion dollar cottage industry. Its normal condition is chaos, further enlivened by conspiracy, espionage and piracy. It's a volatile world, all tips and no iceberg.

But in its determination to make the world make sense, even to a man who doesn't know Lauren from Laurent, TIME stopped the whirlwind in a recent cover story, named names, analyzed trends, put things into perspective, tied up loose ends.

It's one of the things people trust TIME to do: find a particularly lively corner of the current scene, and hold the rush of events steady so you can have a good long look.

You know what TIME does. And reading it every week reminds you how well.

TIME

The Weekly Newsmagazine

CLASS OF '41

The fact of it was, the class probably wouldn't have had a reunion at all if it hadn't been for Jimmy. The last and only other reunion they had had was in 1971, when Jimmy had invited all of them up to the Governor's Mansion in Atlanta. So, if it hadn't been for Jimmy and how well he was doing, they might have let the 35th anniversary slip by.

They were glad now they hadn't. They were kissing and hugging each other in the lobby of Americus' Great Western Inn, and not paying the slightest heed to all the television lights and barely any to the reporter who kept asking them, "Did you feel back then that he would be president one day?" No, said Lottie Tanner, the lady who had organized the reunion. "And I imagine," she added with a twinkle, "that *you* didn't have any idea he would be a year ago." That put an end to the reporter's questions.

The reunion of the Plains High School Class of 1941 was what you would expect of any high school reunion: a little corny, somewhat self-conscious, sentimental and very real. Carter, sporting a new blue tie speckled with red buffaloes—the school emblem—for the occasion, was seated at the main table, Rosalynn at his side. Around him were arrayed twenty-one of the twenty-three surviving members of the Class of 1941. The men were fatter and balder now than they had been thirty-five years ago, the women greyer and dumpier. The passage of three and a half decades seemed to have taken its toll on all of them. All except Jimmy. He merely looked like an older version of his graduation picture. The same smile, the same leanness, the same hair and teeth. Every class has its leader. Jimmy Carter was obviously his. He had made the most money, gained the most prominence and married the prettiest girl. He was, in short, the kind of kid everyone knows in high school, the kid who, for some reason, has all the luck.

Tonight, however, his class was trying to maintain the illusion that he was no more than one of twenty-three. And they were having a good ole time. One by one, each of them stood up, announced his or her name, his home town, what he was doing and how many children and grandchildren he had. It was a varied lot. A corrections officer from Washington. A businessman from Whittier. A secretary from St. Louis. And, by actual count, five peanut farmers from Georgia. Other than that, not much had changed. The class cut-up was still cutting up. The sexiest girl was still the sexiest. "All of you know how lazy I was," said one man. "Well, I still am. I married a woman with children of her own so I didn't have to do any of the work." There was a great, ribald guffaw. Next, an attractive blonde introduced herself and said she was working in Milledgeville, Georgia, as the secretary to a superior court judge. Carter cut it: "Can you type?" People in the room laughed so hard that there were tears in their eyes. Rosalynn, though, turned beet-red and said to her husband, who was laughing hardest of all, "Now, Jimmy. . . ." Another woman said: "We have been close, and I guess we'll always be close. In school, one person's joy was everyone's joy. One person's sorrow was everyone's sorrow. I guess I never saw a class that meant so much to each other as this one."

And then it was the guest of honor's turn. "My name is Jimmy Carter," he said, flashing that grin, "and I'm semi-retired. My family, though, is in the lemonade stand business. I have four children and one grandchild. And let me tell you about Josh. He's just the finest grandchild that ever was born in Georgia."

They passed out awards after that. One for the least hair, the longest distance traveled, the hardest classmate to track down. Then, one of the men presented Jimmy with a hand-knit, red-white-and-blue afghan "'cause it gets cold in Washington." The mention of Washington got them all talking about it. One of the alumni motioned that the next reunion be in the White House two years from now. "Why not five years from now?" Jimmy jested back. "Don't you think I'll be reelected?"

Then, Carter got up and gave a little talk. As heads nodded all over the room, he spoke about their favorite teacher, Miz Julia, how she took an interest in every child, exposed them to new ideas, made sure they were progressing in their reading and kept them thinking about the world outside Plains. "I remember those debates she made us have every Friday," said Carter. "And I remember how we always dreaded preparing for them. And I remember, too, how we always liked them. Kids," he added, "don't get that coming up these days." There were tears now in several eyes, including those of Rosalynn. "We had a code of our own," Carter continued. "It prepared us to go out in the world and do the best we could. . . . We're small and isolated down here in Plains, but you can learn just as much coming to Plains as you can from any of the people in New York City. We lived together, played together and fought together. . . . Now, don't any of you get too far from me. I want you to write me a letter, so I

"MY NAME IS JIMMY CARTER," SAID THE CANDIDATE TO HIS OLD HIGH SCHOOL CLASSMATES, FLASHING THAT GRIN, "AND I'M SEMI-RETIRED. MY FAMILY, THOUGH, IS IN THE LEMONADE STAND BUSINESS"

can always know where you're at. I depend on you. You are my closest friends." Finally, he concluded: "I've tried to represent the class in a nice way. But we all should remember, whatever we do, we are all equal, one as good as the other. Let's have the next reunion in the White House."

Everyone cheered and clapped, and, in spite of myself, I found that I was clapping, too. Journalists are supposed to be cynical about politicians, and, from time to time, I had been more than cynical about Jimmy Carter and the politics of love. But, in this moment, only a fool would be cynical. I was seeing a part of Jimmy Carter I didn't think existed.

Lottie Tanner was bringing the evening to a close. She had written a little speech and she wanted everyone to hear it. Haltingly, and in a broad Georgia accent, she read from the papers in front of her: "I have been talking to a lot of reporters. Some with cameras, some with movie picture cameras, some just with pencil and notebooks, and they have all been swell. I have tried to tell them everything I know about Jimmy and everything I can remember. They all said I have done swell. I want it to be nice in Washington, D.C. And, of course, I want them to be nice to Jimmy and Rosalynn when they go there."

When she finished, she folded the paper in her hands and asked her classmates, "How many of you are staying over for Sunday?" Most of the hands went up. "Well, that's

NEW YORK TIMES

Sleepy Plains, Georgia, already isn't the same. When Carter's former classmates gathered for their 35th high school reunion, it turned into a party for the graduate proven most likely to succeed.

EWING

fine. I can't think of any nicer way to close our high school reunion than if we all go to church tomorrow morning with Jimmy. I'll even go, and I'm a Methodist." For a moment, Carter looked horrified, and he shot a despairing glance at his wife. He was bone-tired from campaigning and had planned to leave early in the morning on a one-day fishing trip to Sea Island, Georgia. "Wait a minute, everybody," he said, getting up. "I have a confession to make. I wasn't planning on going to church tomorrow morning. But let's see, are a lot of you really planning to stay over and come to church?" Again, there was a forest of hands, and, again, Jimmy looked despairingly at Rosalynn. "Okay, then, I'll stay, and we'll all go to church." Catching the eye of an equally despairing aide, Carter said: "You'll take care of it, won't you?" The aide looked heavenward for guidance.

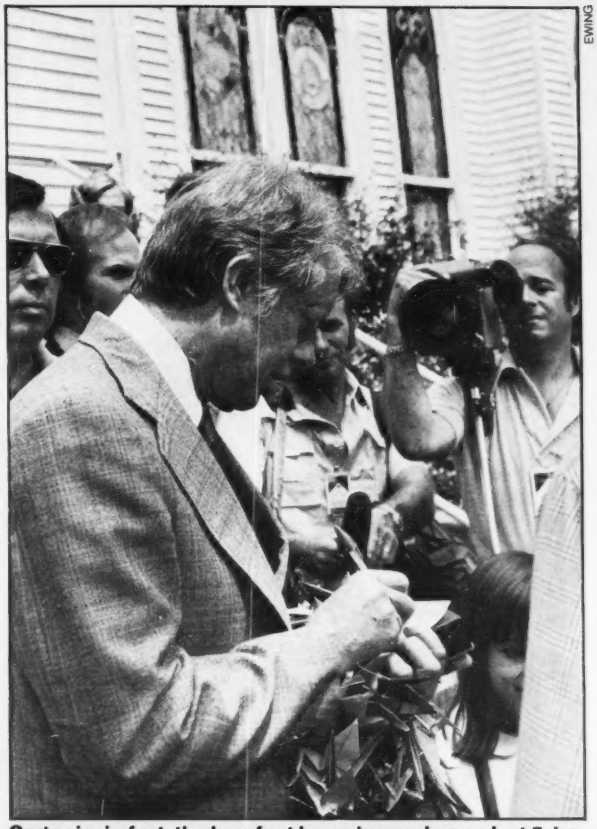
Jimmy lingered half an hour, swapping stories and munching peanuts, then made his goodbyes and walked out into the parking lot. The night was warm and mellow, the sky ablaze with stars. The Secret Service driver stepped forward, but Carter waved him off. With his arm around his wife, he walked over to his car. For a moment, in the darkness of a motel parking lot, he could have been just another successful peanut farmer, going home after a big night on the town. But it was already changing. "He's driving himself," an aide exclaimed in surprise. "Gee, I gotta see how this is done." The answer was—like any man. As Jimmy Carter drove away and into the night, I wondered to myself whether maybe that wasn't his secret. That he was like any man. And that no one knew it better than he.

Eleven o'clock Sunday morning, and the streets of Plains are even more deserted than usual. The shops in town are shuttered. Even campaign headquarters has ceased doing business. Around town, nothing moves, save for a few curious tourists who have come down for the day to gawk at where it all began. They will have to wait for an hour. Eleven o'clock Sunday is a special hour in Plains, as it is in the rest of the South. The people have gone to talk to their God.

Nothing quite approaches Sunday morning in the South. About God and how he is worshiped, the South has always been different: more intense, more total, more emotional, more—there is only one word to describe it—*southern*. The sociologists and historians have always struggled to explain what it is about this region that makes it so, and, in the end, they have always had to abandon their data and their theories, throw up their hands and say that there is simply something about this land, the power it has over people, the dark, hidden romance of it and the brooding, dreamlike quality that imbues the fields and the magnolias, that weds southerners so wholly to their God.

I had always been vaguely uncomfortable, whenever I heard Carter talking about his "personal relationship" with the Lord. Coming from my own religious tradition—non-practicing Roman Catholicism—it sounded both self-righteous and incredibly egotistical, as if Carter were getting a political play-by-play every night from the Lord. There was something a little spooky about a man who talked of his personal chats with Jesus. Would Jesus tell him to nuke the godless Russians? And what, I thought, was Jesus' position on the Equal Rights Amendment or the Humphrey-Hawkins Full Employment Bill or black lung disease? And, if Jesus had one, how would we know that Jimmy was getting the message straight? Normal politicians were bad enough, but one who thought he had the Lord on his side—it sent shivers up my secular spine.

Carter always told us not to worry, that his relationship with the Lord guided, but did not cloud, his political judg-



EWING

Carter is, in fact, the barefoot boy who made good: at 5, he sold peanuts; at 9, he owned real estate.

BLACK STAR

One magazine dares to suggest:

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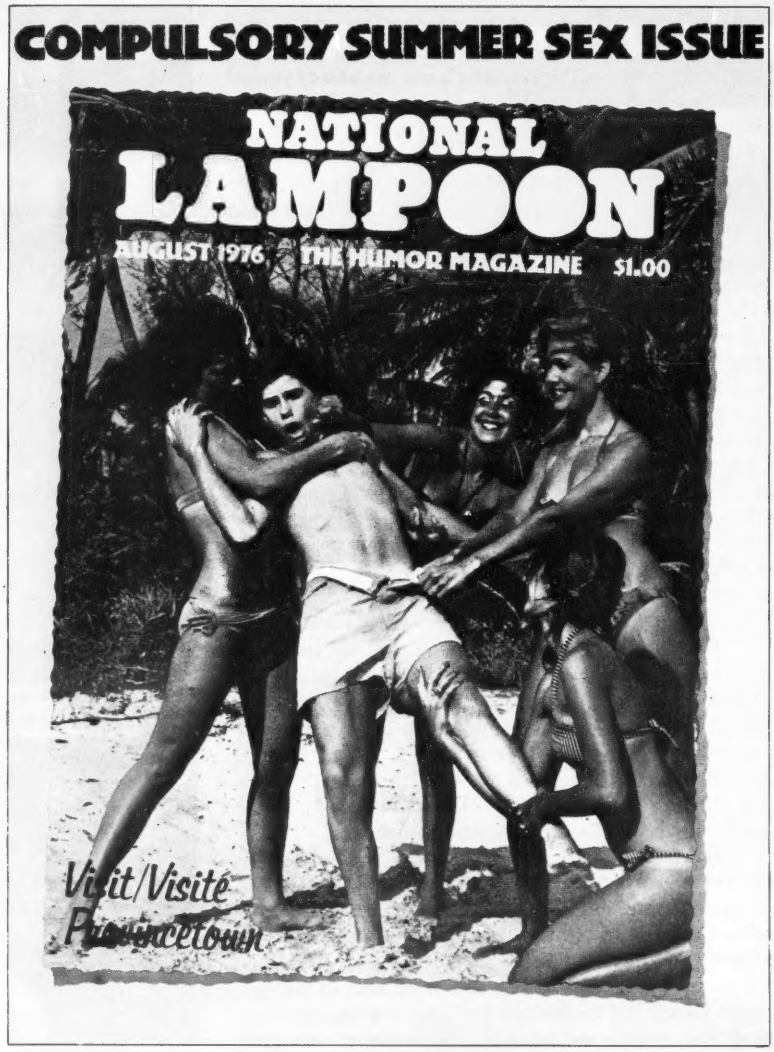

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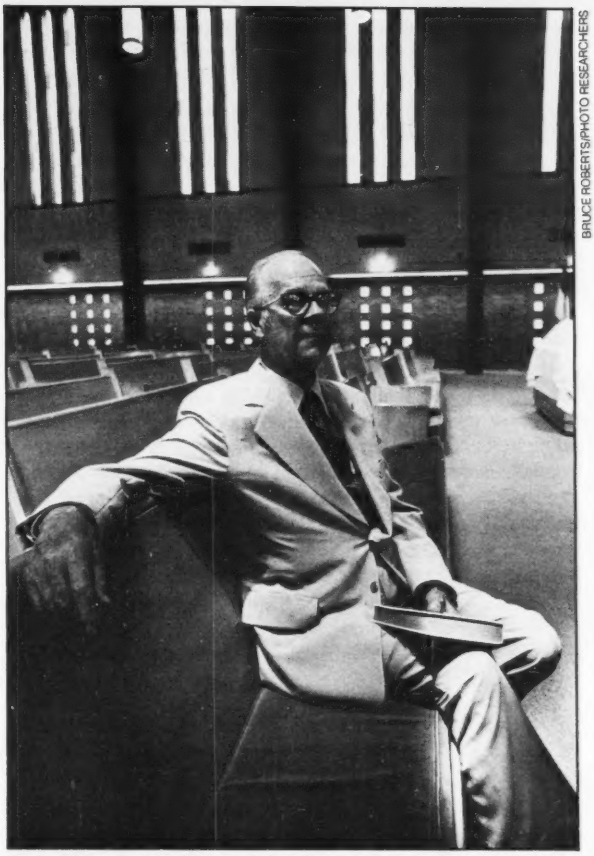
ments. Trust me, in other words. Still, I was apprehensive about the whole God bit, especially the Southern Baptist aspect of Carter's religion. How had one civil rights leader put it after the 1964 election? "Where Jesus' name is shouted the loudest, Goldwater did the best."

Once you crossed over the Mason-Dixon Line, you found it hard to escape Jesus and all his pomp and works. He was always there on the car radio, in the person of some preacher promising damnation for women who wore miniskirts. He was on billboards and on bumper stickers ("Is your God dead? Try Mine") and in tent shows along the side of the road. The Lord made everything turn out all right. Poverty, disease, racism (which, for decades, the South rationalized with biblical teachings), they were all puny beside sin. Take care of sin and you take care of everything. Indeed, you don't even have to think of anything else. Cancer, heart disease, the heartbreak of psoriasis; why, seven out of ten diseases, according to Jack Hudson, the ecclesiastical entrepreneur of Charlotte, were plain psychosomatic. And, as if to prove it, Jimmy Carter's own sister was out making the deaf to hear, the blind to see and the lame to walk at this very moment.

If you were a peanut farmer from Plains, Georgia, who, according to the polls, was about to become the President of the United States, you could believe in miracles more easily than I could. You could go into church, as Jimmy Carter did this Sunday, and, with head bowed, lead the congregation in prayer to the Lord, thanking him for sending Miz Julia, the good lady who had begun to make all things possible, even the dream of becoming president. As I sat there, a few rows behind Jimmy Carter, peeking at him out of the corner of my eye as he prayed, I could only wonder and feel apprehensive. So many things about the South were alien to my experience, but none more than his brand of Christianity. It increased the distance between us, made him more difficult to fathom and, yes, trust. It was, I thought, a gulf that could never be bridged, a chasm of the soul so dark and mysterious that I would forever worry about those private moments of his, when he shut the world out and was alone, talking with his God. What was he really thinking, sitting there, his head so deeply bowed, his eyes so tightly shut. What was Jesus whispering?



BRUCE ROBERTS/PHOTO RESEARCHERS

Owen Cooper: "I did an about-face on race after I found the Lord. I'll admit it."

BORN-AGAIN BUSINESSMAN

I have been telling you of the South as I saw it, taking you from one town and farm to the next, meandering, even as I meandered. But come away from the Baptist Church of Plains for a moment and put yourself down with me a week and 300 miles hence, in Yazoo City, Mississippi. Yes, there really is a place called Yazoo City, Mississippi, just as there is a Yazoo County and a Yazoo River and, for that matter, a Yazoo Baptist Church, where townsfolk worship on Sunday just like they do in Plains. Willie Morris made none of it up. But the former editor of *Harper's*, who is none too kindly remembered here in his home town, is not the purpose of our visit. A paragraph ago, I was in Plains, worrying about Jimmy Carter and his religion. It was here, in Yazoo, in the office of a man named Owen Cooper, that those worries came to an end.

By profession, Mr. Cooper is a businessman. Until his retirement three years ago at the age of 65, Mr. Cooper was head of the Mississippi Chemical Company, a farm cooperative Mr. Cooper founded, and whose gross earnings of $250,000,000 per year make it the largest Mississippi-owned business in the state. Mississippi Chemical, though, is hardly Mr. Cooper's only enterprise. At one time or another, he has founded and/or headed companies with total assets of one billion dollars—nearly all of it southern money. It is no coincidence that Owen Cooper always manages to get involved with businesses with southern backing. He is quietly resentful of the presence of so much northern money in the South. In this, as in other things, including his religion, Mr. Cooper is very much a southerner. Mr. Cooper, of course, is a Southern Baptist.

If you are wondering what religion has to do with a successful businessman like Owen Cooper, the answer is everything. For religion, far more than business, is Owen Cooper's life. He is one of those born-again Christians. And, in his case, being born again changed everything.

He had grown up on a farm, out in Warren County, 40 miles from Yazoo, gone to Ole Miss, studied agriculture and, getting out of school, shrewdly guessed that the end of World War I would bring a shortage of nitrate fertilizer. That put him in the fertilizer business, and on the way to making his fortune.

Then, one night twenty years ago, something happened. He was living in Vicksburg at the time, and a revival meeting had come to town. More out of curiosity than anything else, he went down to the tabernacle, which consisted of rude wooden benches laid atop a sawdust floor, to see the

goings-on. Even now, he cannot fully describe the events of that evening, only that a feeling came over him such as he had never known before. At the end of the service, when the preacher beckoned those who wanted to make their decision for Christ to come forward, Owen Cooper stood up.

That evening, Owen Cooper began reexamining his life. He did not like much of what he saw. Everything he had done up to then, he concluded, had been a mistake, and none more grievous than his attitudes about race. He became aware, suddenly, of injustice, of the "sin" of treating one man differently from another because of the color of his skin. Little things would happen that would move him along. Like the time he went into an all-black cafe to have a Coke and found that everyone was staring at him. But for the stares, Cooper didn't feel uncomfortable. On a hot day the Coke in the black cafe was just as refreshing as that served in the white cafe. Another time, he found himself in Jackson at the annual meeting of the Mississippi Human Rights Commission. One of the guests of honor was missing, and Cooper, as a prominent businessman, was asked to take his place at the head table. There, he found himself sitting next to Aaron Henry, the head of the Mississippi NAACP, and a man with whom, Cooper was surprised to find, he had much in common. They were both Baptists, for one thing.

"I WAS TALKING TO MY SON-IN-LAW ONCE ABOUT ABSOLUTES. AND HE SAID THAT THEY TAUGHT IN COLLEGE THAT THERE WERE NO ABSOLUTES. NO ABSOLUTES! CAN YOU IMAGINE THAT?" —OWEN COOPER, FORMER PRESIDENT OF THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION

Owen Cooper's commitment grew from there. Eventually, he became head of the Mississippi Head Start program, and one of the most vocal advocates of civil rights in the state. At the same time, he was coming to increasing prominence in his church work. All of the publicity, plus Cooper's position as the leading businessman in the state, sparked talk of a Cooper-for-Governor movement. His opponent would have been Ross Barnett, the arch segregationist who barred James Meredith from the University of Mississippi; for that reason, if no other, Cooper dearly would have loved to run. But he was being proposed that year as president of the Southern Baptist Convention. It was in Owen Cooper's nature to choose to run for the church post—and win.

Cooper is officially retired from all his church and business posts today, though he still keeps an office at Mississippi Chemical, atop a lovely green hill that commands a view of the Delta stretching nearly to the Mississippi, some 30 miles away. The day I stopped in to see him was rather typical. He was sitting behind a desk littered with correspondence, talking on the phone with someone about an upcoming trip to Tanzania. He flashed a warm smile, cupped his hand over the receiver and beckoned me in. "This will just take a minute more," he said. "That's right," he answered into the receiver. "We've got to get up those plans. If everyone doesn't move quickly, you know what it could mean for those people in the Sahel? Disaster. Sheer, utter disaster. Okay, I'll get back to you next week about that. My love to your family. Bless you, too."

When he put down the phone, I asked Cooper about his health, and he grinned broadly. "I'm only 68. Got ten good years left before I have to go down to the condominium I have in Florida and sit in the sun. Ten good years. Enough to see Jimmy through his second term."

As we talked, it became apparent to me that born-again Southern Baptists come in more than one variety. There was a Bible on his desk, just as there was on Jack Hudson's desk, and he quoted from it, just as Jack Hudson quoted from his. But there the resemblance ended. Coming from Owen Cooper, all the things that had worried me about Jimmy Carter's kind of Christianity became very palatable."I take the attitude that a person's body is really the temple of God," he said. "That's why I don't smoke or drink or fool around sexually." He paused and smiled: "Not that I have that much opportunity to fool around anymore."

I asked him about his conversion, and what it meant to be born again. He reached for his Bible. "Do you mind if I quote from this?" Fine, I answered. "By the way," he asked, "are you a Christian?" Well, I'm a Catholic, I replied. I'm not sure that's the same thing. "Oh," he said, "Catholics are Christians, all right. What I mean is, have you had a personal experience with our Lord Jesus Christ?" No, I answered, beginning to feel slightly uncomfortable. "Well, let me explain," he went on. "It's all in here: John, Chapter 3. This is the chapter where the Lord tells the parable about the Pharisee. And he says, right here, 'except that a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of Heaven.' That's what we mean when we use the term 'born again.' It isn't baptism. Baptism to us has no efficacy. Being born again is making a conscious choice to accept the Lord as your Savior. We think—the Bible tells us—that when a person reaches the age of accountability, he can have a personal experience with God through Christ. That's what happened to me in Vicksburg. I had that experience and my life has been different ever since. No question about it. I found out a lot of things as soon as I got religion. Race, for instance. I did a complete about-face on race after I found the Lord and accepted him as my Savior. I'll admit it."

"You mean you found something in the Bible that changed your mind about blacks?" I interjected. "No," he said. "Not in the Bible. In fact, a lot of the people look to the Bible to justify their racism. I had a friend once who did that, a really saintly man. He was just convinced that black people were inferior to whites. And, when you disagreed with him about it, he could point to all this Scripture that, he said, backed up his position. No, you don't find it in the Bible. When you've accepted Jesus Christ as your Savior, you find it in yourself."

There was no smugness in Cooper's declaration, just a simple statement of fact. Even now, he wasn't about to force his attitudes about religion or race on anyone. "We waited five years before we voted an open-door policy in our church," he related. "We could have brought it up right away, but there would have been a big fight. We might even have been able to win the vote. But we didn't want an open-door policy that way. We wanted to wait until people were ready for it, then let them choose it for themselves. I have friends

EWING

At the Yazoo Baptist Church in Miss., born-again worshipers are just as likely to be black as white.

who disagree with me," he went on, "but that doesn't stop us from being friends. John Satterfield, for instance. He used to be my neighbor. Worked as counsel for this company. And he's very prominent in the Citizens Council. Well, we'd disagree about it, of course, but we'd go right on being friends. It's like that in the South. We have a tradition of civility here. I'd go off to the Baptists and talk integration, and John would go off to the Methodists and talk segregation. It's no use fighting people like John. Only thing that is going to change them is a funeral."

Despite Cooper's liberalism on race, he was deeply conservative on many other issues. His conservatism sprang from a belief in fundamental morals, fundamentals which, as he saw it, were under grave attack. "If this country needs anything," he said, "it's a belief in fundamental moral values. I was talking to my son-in-law once about absolutes. And he said that they taught him in college that there were no absolutes. No absolutes! Can you imagine that? Well, that's the trouble in this country today. The ends justify the means. Situation ethics. The complete breakdown of morality—it all goes together. I don't think this country can survive if we keep up like that. Everyone seems to be out for himself these days. It's all self-interest. Everyone has got his little interest group to protect. Public employees going out on strike and letting the government hang, not caring at all. It's self-interest is all it is. We used to sit down as people and consider the best interests of the community. We've got to get back to that. Like the Frenchman said. America is great because it is good. When it ceases to be good, it will cease to be great. That's what's happening today. My goodness, if there is no right and wrong, then Nixon was right, and we might as well put him back in the White House."

Cooper was confident that Carter could change all that, in large measure because he was convinced that Carter was a moral man. "There's a hunger for it in this country," Cooper said. "And I think Jimmy can begin to fill it. No one likes the leviathan of government. We've got to begin to turn it around. We need to start changing course. And he'll start us on that new course, not by having religious gatherings in the White House, like Nixon did—Billy Graham one week, Norman Vincent Peale the next. That's not what we need. We need a positive moral influence, a man who can show us by his own example. That's Jimmy Carter."

It was Owen Cooper, at any rate. If his life were an example, I didn't have to worry about born-again Christians, or Southerners. I might even begin to like them. Owen Cooper, in fact, was hard not to like. He possessed that appealing serenity of knowing just what he believed, that it was right and that the Lord was on his side. The world he beheld was simple and uncomplicated, even if the troubles that beset it were not. All one had to do was hew to the straight and narrow. The Lord would provide the rest. "If you strip government down to its bare essentials," he said, "it's honesty, morality, unselfishness and being generous toward people in trouble. "It's all right here," he said, tapping his Bible, "right here in the Book."

He could see by my smile that I did not fully share that confidence. "I hope," he said, taking my hand, as I prepared to leave, "that one day you'll have that personal religious experience." "I hope so, too," I replied. And it gave me a chill, knowing I meant it.

LOWNDES COUNTY

I came to Alabama wanting to give it a chance. The truth, though, is that I hadn't wanted to come at all.

This is the South of my memory, not Atlanta or fried chicken or civilized dons at Chapel Hill but rather Birmingham and Bull Connor and four little black girls lying dead and mangled in a church on a Sunday morning.

It is hard to be neutral about a state like Alabama or Mississippi. If you came to political consciousness during the sixties, as I did, too much history has gone down in both these places to ever really forget. Southerners, though, keep telling you how things have changed, how even Alabama and Mississippi have put the past behind them. Since you like them, you want to believe them. And so you listen as they tell you that the explosion of black voter registration has made a new reality. There are black governments now in counties where redneck sheriffs once held sway, and over in Mississippi a moderate named Cliff Finch has been elected governor by putting together an unlikely coalition of blacks and poor whites. Not even Wallace can ignore blacks anymore. There is a new Wallace, they tell you, more mellow, more relaxed, more aware, since the shooting in Laurel, of his own mortality. Why, he is even kissing black homecoming queens.

You want to believe them and give Alabama that chance. You still don't want to come here, but you know you have to, precisely because of all the history that has gone down here. George Wallace makes you come. This is his state and you can't ignore it, any more than you can ignore him. This is still his South, as much as it is Jimmy Carter's. Carter wasn't responsible for what happened on the Petus Bridge on the road from Selma to Montgomery. But the events are part of him, as they are a part of every southerner. What I am saying is, some of Jimmy Carter is down that road, too. If I were ever to find him, I would have to go down it. Maybe not to Selma itself, but to a place like Selma. And there was no better place than Lowndes County.

A bare 25 miles from Montgomery, Lowndes County and Hayneville, its principal town and county seat (population 520), are stark reminders of how slender a hold civilization still has on much of the South. It wasn't too many years ago that they were still plowing with mules in Lowndes. There is still only one traffic light in Hayneville—not that it is really needed—and many of the houses still don't have electric light or plumbing. A number of people, especially blacks, who account for 70 percent of the county's population, have never seen a doctor, and the appearance of a stranger in town brings sharp looks and whispered conversation.

Lowndes is what southerners mean when they talk about their frontier tradition, the frontier that made them so much a part of what they are: hard-working, a little wild, given to hoots and hollers and coon-hunting, and, if you cross them, well, there can be no one meaner than a red-faced southerner who figures he's been wronged, especially if he's got a snootfulla Jack Daniels. "They can smile at you one minute and stick a knife between your shoulder blades the next," is how one South Carolinian summed up folks who live in places like Lowndes. "Best be careful if you go down there," he advised me. "I'd carry a gun, I would."

The statistics bear him out, not just about Lowndes but about the entire South. According to a 1968 survey, 52 percent of all white southern families owned guns, as opposed to only 27 percent of their nonsouthern white counterparts. Another survey found that the homicide rate for the South was two and a half times greater than that for the rest of the country. Crimes against property, however, were far rarer than they were in the North. For some reason, southerners take out their hostilities against people, invariably each other. And it was the South, of course, that made that unique contribution to American jurisprudence: lynching.

From time to time, experts have puzzled over the phenomenon of southern violence and come forward with various explanations, from childrearing to poverty to rural culture. None of them ever held up under serious scrutiny. Violence was another one of those things about the South that defied reason. Only a southerner like W. J. Cash—the North Carolina newspaperman whose *Mind of the South,* now 35 years old, is still the classic in the field—could comprehend it, and, even then, he had to fall back on poetry and impression, on the power of the southern frontier.

"To stand on his head in a bar, to toss down a pint of whiskey at a gulp, to fiddle and dance all night, to bite off the nose or gouge out the eye of a favorite enemy, to fight harder and love harder than the next man, to be known eventually far and wide as a hell of a fellow—such would be his focus," Cash wrote of his countrymen. "To lie on his back for days and weeks, storing power as the air he breathed stores power under the sun of August, and then to explode, as that air explodes in a thunderstorm, in a violent outburst of emotion—in such a fashion would he make life not only tolerable, but infinitely sweet. . . ."

There are still gougings and ear-bitings in the bars on Saturday night. And when the sheriff rolls by to clean up the mess, it is with gun at the ready. The protagonists are hauled off to jail to spend the night, and on the docket, the space for the charge will be filled in with the words "crazy" or "causing trouble." Come the morning, though, the cell door will swing open, and the men will walk out, free, the trouble forgotten, the calm restored, until the next Saturday night.

Still, Lowndes might well have been forgotten had it not been for the two young clergymen from the North who came to Hayneville in the hot summer of 1965 to help register blacks and to witness for Christ. Their names were Richard F. Morrisroe and Jonathan Myric Daniels. On the evening of August 20, Morrisroe, a Roman Catholic priest, and Daniels, an Episcopal seminary student, were standing outside a small food store on the main street that runs through Hayneville. They had just been released from jail, where they had been held for three days, after being arrested for picketing. Tom Coleman, a special deputy sheriff, approached them, shotgun in hand. Daniels, who recognized Coleman, stepped forward to offer his hand. As he began saying that he held no ill will toward the lawman, Coleman's shotgun exploded. At point-blank range, the blast blew away most of Daniels' face, killing him instantly. Morrisroe, who was standing alongside Daniels, was critically wounded.

Coleman was eventually arrested and charged with first-degree murder. At his trial, held in the Hayneville courthouse, several young white men came forward and swore that Daniels was threatening Coleman with a pistol at the time the deputy shot him. The all-white male jury was unmoved by the fact that Daniels had never owned a gun and that no pistol was ever recovered from the murder scene. After a closing argument by the prosecutor that, according to one observer, "sounded more like a summation for the defense," the jury

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retired to deliberate. Within the hour, they came back with a verdict of not guilty.

Ray Jenkins recounted the story as we drove into Hayneville. Jenkins, a lean, raw-boned figure with arms like tree limbs, is editor of the editorial page of the *Alabama Journal* and one of those people northerners instinctively turn to when they want to know what it is about this place that makes it so different. Jenkins talks to them, and then he takes them out to Hayneville to see for themselves.

Jenkins understands the South because he grew up in it, loves it and, despite several attempts to lure him elsewhere, would never leave it, not even after Hayneville. He was born on a farm in south Georgia, Jenkinsville to be exact, and there he might have stayed, had the county school not closed down for lack of attendance. "If that school hadna closed," Jenkins says, "I'd still be there farming." Jenkinsville is still home, though, in Ray's mind, and he makes it a point to get back there three or four times a year to walk around the fields and streets where he grew up as a boy, and talk to his mama about how things are going in the South. "She's the best poll there is," he says. "Any time I want to know what people really think, all I have to do is call her. She likes Jimmy Carter a lot, even though she still thinks he crossed her by hanging up Martin Luther King's portrait in the statehouse. She can forgive him for that, though. He's from home."

We stopped in a little cafe—the only one in town, in fact—and went in to sample a plate of noontime barbecue. I began asking him what Tom Coleman was up to these days, but Jenkins told me to keep my voice down. "This is a small county," he said. "People talk. They might not like hearing what you're saying about Tom." In a low voice, Jenkins went on to explain. "Now, if they had had a vote here, they wouldna voted to kill that boy Jonathan Daniels, even though he was from the North and a nigger-lover. But, once it was done, they had to protect Coleman. That was the terrible part, even more terrible than the murder, how they corrupted those boys into lying for Coleman, saying he had a pistol or a knife and all. Everyone knew that wasn't true, but it was like an act of absolution. By acquitting him, the community was saying that it was willing to accept his guilt."

He ate a few more bites of barbecue, then continued: "If I had been Jonathan Daniels' brother, I wouldna let him get away with it. I know what I would have done. I would have come to Hayneville, studied his [Coleman's] habits, where he drank, when he visited his women, and then one day, after I knew everything about him, I would have blown his damn head off."

Such justice might not go down as easily in Hayneville anymore though, since law, of sorts, had come to the county in the form of a new sheriff, a black man named John Hulett. When Jenkins and I stopped by to visit him, he was hunched over his two-way radio, instructing a deputy on the handling of a domestic dispute in progress. "You watch yourself real good, you hear," Hulett advised.

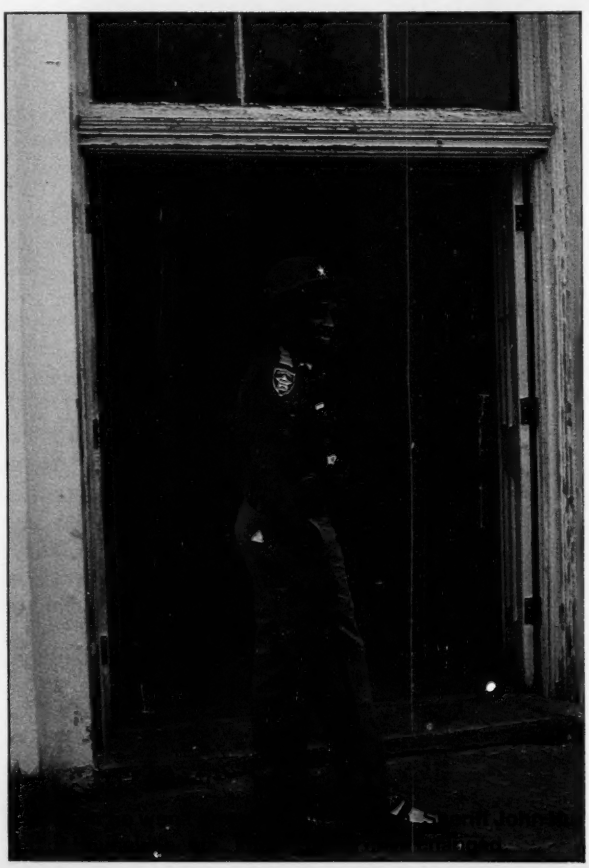
Hulett was one of the few good by-products of Jonathan Daniels' murder. After the killing, voter registration intensified, to the point where, within a few years, blacks had an electoral majority in the county. They used their clout in 1970 to elect Hulett, a former anti-poverty worker and civil rights activist. Since then, things had been just fine in the county, Hulett insisted; violent crimes were way down, and whites, while they might not have liked his being sheriff, weren't giving him any trouble either. In fact, he said he could count on a number of them for help, including a former special deputy named Tom Coleman who now worked for the state highway department. "We get along," Hulett said.

It was easy to see why he did. John Hulett was no troublemaker. Having grown up on a farm in Lowndes, he understood how the county worked—that, despite the changes, there were still certain things a black man, even one wearing a badge, didn't do. Like arresting a white woman, for instance. It didn't seem to bother him, though he said he was a "law and order man, and law and order has no color." These days, he said, the black man's biggest problem in Lowndes wasn't his white neighbors but the poverty that infected them all. "Bad schools, no industry, the young people have to sit around all day doing nothin'," as Hulett put it. "Today, there's a different kind of slavery."

Young black people are still leaving Lowndes, as they are leaving the rest of Alabama. During the sixties, a total of 370,000 people left the state, and of that number all but 5,000 were black. They left, Hulett said, "because there ain't no opportunity here." The drain was so great that, if it continued, Lowndes might have a white majority again one day, and John Hulett most likely would be out of a job. That did not sit well with him. Because his very presence had brought one important change to Lowndes, however unchanging the rest of its ways. As Hulett summed it up: "Black people aren't afraid to walk down the street anymore."

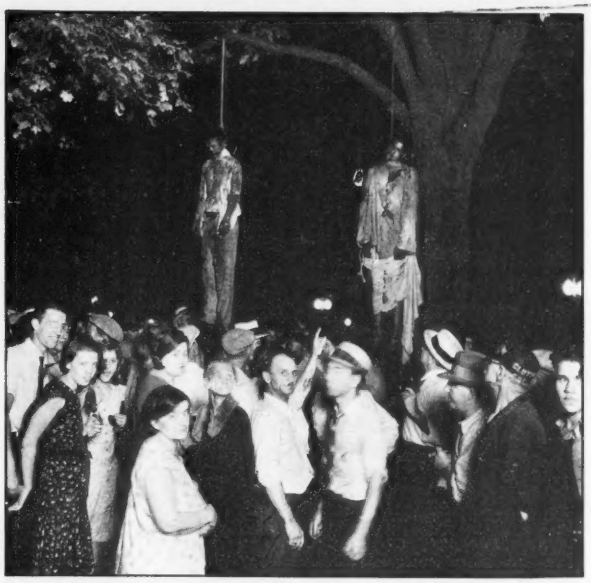
There was a time, Ray Jenkins told me, when that was not so. Well into the twentieth century, blacks were still treated as property in Lowndes, to be disposed of according to the white man's wishes. To illustrate the point, Jenkins took me out to the countryside to an abandoned plantation called Dicksonia.

The place was falling down now, the interior gutted by fire, the fields empty, the front yard choked with weeds. But in its day Dicksonia had been one of the leading cotton



EMING

plantations in the state. And Robert Dickson—"Mr. Bob," as he was known throughout the county, the man who owned it—ruled over its acres with an iron hand. "Here you see the site of the last case of peonage in the state of Alabama, probably in the whole country," said Jenkins. He explained that in 1948 one of Mr. Bob's "niggers" had run off, and, or so Mr. Bob said, without paying off the rent he owed on one of Dicksonia's shacks. Mr. Bob pursued him, caught up with him and, to make an example for the other blacks working on the place, chained him to a tree in front of the big house.



MAGNUM

At length, news of these events reached the ears of the local authorities, who, while clearly sympathetic to Mr. Bob's plight, advised him that he would have to let "the nigger" go, else he would be arrested and charged with peonage. Mr. Bob refused and continued to refuse, even after the state's attorney threatened to haul him into jail. In the end, Mr. Bob was arrested and had to pay a small fine. The black man went free.

Mr. Bob now lies in a nearby cemetery amidst the graves of Civil War veterans. The United Daughters of the Confederacy have erected a marker for the veterans with their names listed on it, the names the same as those of many of the white families still prominent in the county. Mr. Bob's grave, however, is nearly covered over. Jenkins and I had to clear away the weeds to read his tombstone. "Says here he died in 1949," Jenkins said. "Just a year later." He smiled. "Having to let that fella go must have killed him."

Jenkins told me to drive back to Montgomery along a different route than the one on which we had come. There was one more bit of local history he wanted to show me. After we had gone some miles, he pointed to a spot beside the road, close to where some earth-moving machines were widening the highway. "Right there," he said, "is where Viola Liuzzo was murdered. They just pulled alongside and shot her with a shotgun. Car ran off the road. The black kid who was with her was frightened they would come back and get him, so he stayed in the car with the body. It was two hours before somebody found them."

"Did they ever get the people who did it?" I asked, by now sensing the answer.

"You mean did they arrest anybody?" Jenkins half laughed. "Hell, no. They knew who did it, though, right away. Didn't you know? They had an FBI informer right in the car with 'em." Jenkins went on to recount other racial killings where the murderers were known and had still gone free. There had been a black man dropped off a bridge by a crowd of whites, apparently because he had looked the wrong way at a white woman. And then there were the four little girls in Birmingham. Bill Baxley, the Alabama attorney general and a likely contender for the governorship once Wallace's term is up in 1979, was investigating that killing right now. The murderers were known—Jenkins mentioned one of their names to me and I recognized it—the question now was assembling the evidence to prove it. After 13 years, it was highly doubtful that anyone ever would.

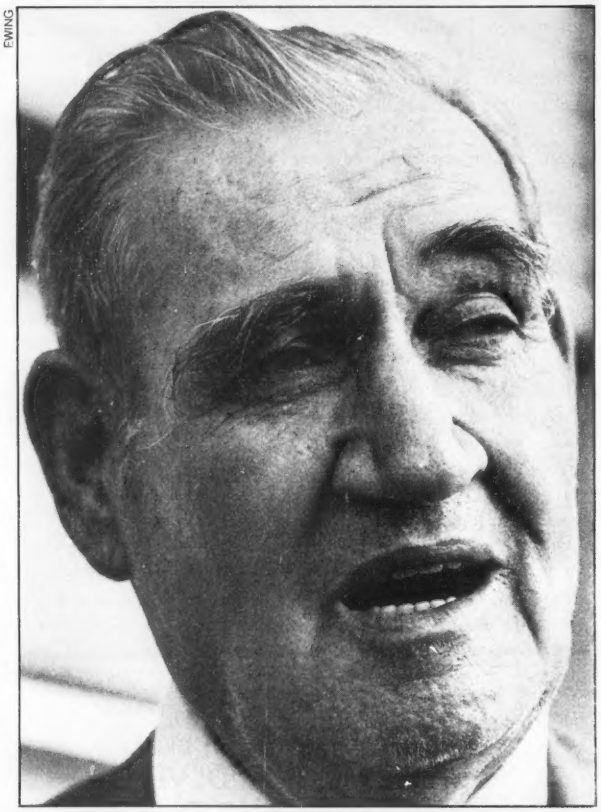
Something had been bothering me the entire afternoon and, finally, I blurted it out. "How the hell can you stick around a place like this, knowing what is going on?" It is a question every southerner, at least those of Jimmy Carter's and Ray Jenkins' generation, has had to confront at one time or another in his life, and when he began to speak, it was obvious that Jenkins had been thinking about it. "It's what keeps everybody in the South," he said. "Whatever you think about it, however mad it makes you sometimes, well, it's your home. You develop a sense of irony about it after a while. I think that Carter has that sense about Plains. Intellectually, you know that where you were born and grew up is far from being the greatest place in the world. That there isn't opportunity, that you can't grow. You know about the kind of things that go on in a place like Lowndes. But what you know in your head doesn't go with what you feel in your heart. All of us who grew up like I did, and owned a little bit of land, always knew that we were going to be there next year. That means something. It means a lot, in fact. Knowing that you can get out of life what you put into it, and, if you are lucky, maybe a little bit more. For my children, though, it's different. They don't have the same feeling about the land that I do. When I take them back to the farm, it doesn't mean anything to them. You know, my people came in here in the nineteenth century. I'll probably be the last, though, who keeps that farm. My children won't. They'll regard it as just a damn burden."

"HOWEVER MAD IT MAKES YOU SOMETIMES, WELL, IT'S YOUR HOME. YOU DEVELOP A SENSE OF IRONY. YOU STAY BECAUSE YOU HOPE IT WILL CHANGE. BECAUSE THERE'S SO MUCH GOOD, AND THERE'S JUST THIS ONE THING —RACISM—THAT'S SO BAD"
—RAY JENKINS, ALABAMA JOURNAL

We drove the rest of the way in silence. As we arrived back at the newspaper, Jenkins said, "You want to know why I don't leave? Well, here's my office. On up the street there is the state capitol and George Wallace. And on down the street is the federal building and Judge Frank Johnson. Two mer as different as they could be. They stand for totally different things. They hate each other because of it. And here I am, in the middle. It's a good place to watch things go on." Smiling, he added: "That is, if you don't get run over."

BLUES FOR MR. JIM

EWING



Folsom: "I sure was the most hell-raising governor."

Before leaving, Jenkins had told me that one of the people I had to see in Alabama, if I were to understand the South, was Jim Folsom. "You mean, *Big* Jim Folsom?" I said incredulously. "I thought he was dead." "A lot of people think that," Jenkins laughed. "But he's still around. Try the old Whitley Hotel. All the old-timers stay there. Jim, too, when he's in town."

Big Jim Folsom is a legend in the South, the last living descendant of the populist tradition. To hear he was alive was like finding out that Huey Long had taken up residence in Cullman, Alabama, under a different name. Big Jim (he got his name from the fact that he stands a hulking 6'8" tall) and Huey had a lot in common. Both were governors, Folsom serving one term in the forties, another in the late fifties. Both ran against the "big interests." Both were farm boys. Both were surrounded by scandal. Both detested lawyers. Both refused to use race to get elected. Both were nearly impeached. Both were larger-than-life characters. Both were damned while they were on the scene, then sorely missed when they were gone.

Jim Folsom was a character, all right. There were dozens of Folsom stories, but one of the favorites around Montgomery had to do with the time when the legislature was fixing to impeach him. A big out-of-state convention had come to town, and Folsom was scheduled to deliver an address on the wonders of Alabama. Midway into his prepared text, though, he threw the pages away. "I know what you all want to hear," he boomed. "Y'all want to hear how those boys in the legislature are trying to impeach me. Well, I'll tell ya. There's a big hotel here in Montgomery, and it's a fine hotel. And in that hotel, they got a big suite, four or five rooms, and it's a fine suite. And in that suite there's cabinets filled with liquor, my favorite kind of liquor. And there's girls, too. Redheads, blondes, brunettes, and they're there just for me. Legislature's set the whole thing up. And, I'll tell you something, if they aim to catch me that way . . . they will."

That's why folks loved Jim Folsom. He didn't give a damn what people thought about him, just so he thought he was doing right. The big interests and their puppets in the Alabama legislature never managed to impeach Jim Folsom, but they never forgave him, either. Long after he was out of office, they maneuvered to have his pension taken away. It would have been a staggering blow to Folsom, who had about gone broke in the insurance business. Old, sick, going deaf and still pursued by the demon drink, he needed that money, and so he went to George Wallace to help him out. Folsom had helped launch Wallace on his political career during the fifties by appointing him to the Board of Trustees of all-black Tuskegee Institute ("and then he turned around and made a damn fool out of me," Folsom said later). Their ties were further cemented by Wallace's second marriage to Cornelia, Folsom's niece. But when Folsom came for help, Wallace refused to lift a finger. Folsom, in turn, decided to run against Wallace and, despite his age and condition, managed to roll up a respectable vote in the 1974 primary.

After the election, Cornelia was beseeching George to help out Uncle Jim, which occasioned one of the rare funny stories about Wallace. After Cornelia had talked on for what seemed like half an hour about all the good Uncle Jim had done for George and the people of Alabama, Wallace said in exasperation, "Cornelia, if I could get these damn legs to work, I'd kick you right in the ass."

It was ironic that Wallace wouldn't help Folsom in his hour of need, because both men, each in their own way to be sure, are the last of their breeds. Wallace, as Folsom himself put it, is "our last Civil War governor." Whoever succeeds Wallace when his term runs out in 1979 will surely be a "modern southerner," more interested in working with the federal government than defying it.

As for Folsom, his tradition was long since dead, fallen victim to the "new South Creed," a kind of Chamber of Commerce progressivism that counseled racial moderation, not because it was morally correct but because it was good for business. Where the populists like Folsom resisted the big money of the North, the progressives welcomed it—then looked the other way while northern companies stripped the forest bare of trees and gouged what slim resources the South had beneath her soil. Progressives and populists had been warring in the South since 1891, when Henry Grady, the leader of the progressives, declared the first of the "New Souths," a peculiar phenomenon that seemed to recur in 20-year cycles. It was a battle the populists could never hope to win. They were outspent and outgunned. The enemy was something no band of farmers, however determined, could hope to vanquish. Its name was progress.

Country versus city; old ways versus progress. It was an ancient conflict in the South, settled but never really resolved. A down-home politician could still get some mileage out of it, as a southern Georgia politician named Jimmy Carter proved during his 1970 race against a smooth Atlanta lawyer named Carl Sanders. Sanders had the backing of the entire At-

lanta establishment. Carter openly courted the redneck vote. Carter called his more heavily financed opponent "Cufflinks Carl" and linked him to "the country club set." He didn't have to talk issues; from there on, the battlelines were clearly drawn. Slick-talking, enlightened Carl Sanders against the reactionary, country-talking boy out of Plains, Annapolis and Georgia Tech. Jimmy won in a walk.

Even now, running for the presidency, Carter got some of his most emotional responses, especially before rural and southern audiences, when, with that smile of his, he listed as one of his qualifications for high office the fact that "I am not a lawyer."

Jimmy Carter was a man with dirt under his fingernails, even if now the dirt was more psychic than actual. The Deep South, and, from the looks of his primary returns, everywhere else except California, New York, Oregon and a handful of other diehard states, could understand such a man. Were they ever to meet, I imagine he and Big Jim Folsom would get along just fine.

Big Jim, just as Jenkins had predicted, was staying at the Whitley Hotel. I found him there late one afternoon, watching the sunset through the lobby windows, with three equally grizzled old-timers. "They're part of my crowd," he explained. "There aren't many of us left."

We went up to his room to talk. As he got on the elevator, the black attendant smiled broadly and said, "Good afternoon, Governor. Glad to see you around and looking good." "Well, thank you," Folsom said. "Can't say, though, that I haven't been better." The room, to my disappointment, was a far cry from that wonderful suite Folsom had talked about years ago. The paint was peeling from the ceiling and the carpet was nearly worn through. It was the sort of room you would stay in only if it held great meaning or there were no other rooms in town.

As Folsom eased his great bulk into a chair, I noticed that his shirt was dirty and stained with what might have been gravy from the noon meal. He was wearing battered farmer's boots, the kind that lace up around the top. Folsom caught me eyeing his boots, and he held his foot up for closer inspection. "Call these my clodhoppers. Wear 'em around the farm. They're fine work shoes. Some reason, though, I wore 'em down here. Jus' habit, I guess."

I told him why I had come, that I had heard he was the most popular governor Alabama had ever had. "I don't know if I was the most popular governor Alabama ever had," he cut in, "but I sure was the most hell-raisin'." I went on to tell him that some southern historians I had talked to compared him to Huey Long. "Huey?" he said, grinning in astonishment. "They say I'm like Huey Long? Well, that's the nicest thing I've heard in a long time." And then, for the next two hours, I let the old man talk, listening to him with the same fascination you would have if suddenly you encountered Thomas Edison or Abraham Lincoln on the street.

"First time I ran," he said, "was in 1942. I run second. One man, one vote. That's the major reason I ran. Oh, there were the usual things: roads, schools, taking care of the old folks, homes, family and fireside. But that wasn't the big one. One man, one vote. You've heard of that, haven't you? That was my idea. We didn't have that then. Twelve counties out of 36 ran the state—one-tenth of the population."

"And who ran the counties?" I asked. "Big business," he snorted. "They bought 'em, cash money. Now, understand, I was in business, a little *in*surance business. So they're not all bad. But *these* businesses . . . well, they were against me and I was against them. They're good folks, but

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they believe in *slavery*! These corporations believe they control the state! *They do!* Alabama Power, the steel companies, the *in*surance companies—they think they are God. Just an ordinary millionaire—they think he's trash in the street. And when they get down to plain, ordinary working people—they're nothing. And the labor unions? They're pretty much in bed with the companies."

Then Big Jim turned to his other great hate: lawyers. "Lawyers don't believe in separation of power," he said. "When I became governor, I wanted to pass a law that would vacate the legal license of any lawyer who came into the legislature, so he couldn't do both. Well, they set up a bloc against me. Tried to impeach me. They had the votes, too, and they mighta, if I hadna gone around the state making eight or ten speeches a day, telling folks about 'em. One branch, one office. That's another one of my ideas. The way it is now with lawyers, it's the biggest fraud in government. They can git money from one of the big interests and they call it a fee. I take that same kind of money and they call it a bribe. If one thing will destroy our nation, it's that. It's a religion to me. Hell, it's more important than a religion. That's why they're still trying to take away my pension."

The mention of the pension problem got Big Jim to talking a bit about himself. "I never made any money," he said, almost proudly, I thought. "I've been a slave all my life." He related how his grandfather had come to northern Alabama in the early 1850s from Richmond, freed his slaves and become an abolitionist. "I imagine that didn't make him any too popular in Alabama," I cut in. "Nooo, in north Alabama people didn't hold too much account for slavery. When Alabama seceded from the Union, my neighboring county, it seceded from Alabama. Called itself the free state of Winston. If Abe Lincoln could have spared the troops and sent 'em on down to help us, my county woulda seceded, too. Working people didn't want the Civil War," he went on. "It was the idea of the big slaveholders. If we'da had one man, one vote back then, we wouldna had the Civil War. Andy Jackson—now there was a real Democrat. Our greatest president, after Mr. Lincoln, and a southerner, too, jus' like Jimmy Carter. Well, Andy Jackson understood that. He said if he ever caught up with John C. Calhoun, he'd hang him from the highest tree in South Carolina."

There was no let-up in Folsom's populism. He saw everything in class terms, big man against little man, city dweller against farmer, with the farmers and the little men struggling heroically, as he had himself, and inevitably getting the short end of the stick, as, inevitably, he had himself as well. He saw race by the same lights.

"This race issue runs in cycles," he said. "The government passed the Thirteenth, Fourteenth and Fifteenth amendments to the Constitution, and forthwith proceeded to ignore them. The big investors come down here—we let 'em come down here 'cause we was all broke—Gulf Oil, U.S. Steel, and they play us off each other, white man against black man, like it was a hobby with them or something. And they do a pretty good job of it, too. They just feed money out to poor white people. They go out then and get into cussin' with the black man. Big money does that. And blacks folks just as bad.

"I always told people the Civil War was over—let's get on with next year. Then civil rights happened. I was for it. Hell, I was always against the poll tax and this thing we did down here, in the counties, when the sheriff contracted his prisoners, the black ones, out to the big farmers. Always thought that was just like slavery. I wouldn't appoint a man unless he promised me not to do that. Now Martin Luther King. I watched him, saw he was making progress. I could have been a very popular man in this state if I had sent the National Guard into Montgomery to break up the busing boycott. But I didn't. I read this book this newspaper fella gave me, the life of Mahatma Gandhi. He never fought back. That's what I told Martin Luther King. Whatever you do, don't fight back. And he didn't. And that's why he won and black people can sit on the bus wherever they want."

We talked for a while about Carter, and it was plain that Big Jim liked him, liked especially what a Carter presidency would mean for the South. "We're coming back into the country," he said. "We never did leave it. These slaveholders took us out of the nation, and the slaveholders only," he continued, and it was obvious he wasn't merely talking about John C. Calhoun.

Big Jim had to go. At the age of 74, he was off on another cause, this time a big meeting in support of the Equal Rights Amendment. "Same thing, only different," he said, smiling. "One woman, one vote." As I was putting away my notebook, he put one of his big hands on my arm and drew close. "One more thing," he said. "Tell me the truth. They really compare me to Huey Long?" "Yes, sir, they do," I assured him. "Well, isn't that jus' fine. I'm honored, really honored. Jus' think, me and Huey Long."

IF THOSE COTTON BALLS GET ROTTEN

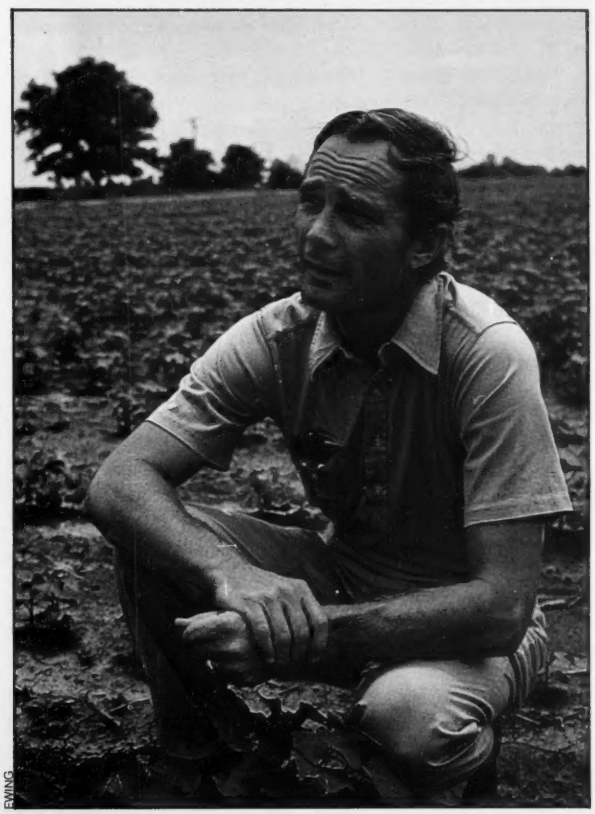
I had been in the South now nearly a month, and the time was approaching when I would have to turn north, toward home. All that remained now was Mississippi.

By now, I had gotten over my terrors. Whatever had been in me that hated the South had been drained away somewhere between Charlotte and Yazoo City. Heading up the Mississippi Delta I found myself poking along, turning down one-lane country roads for no reason other than to see where they led, stopping at service stations to talk with the old men sitting out front and, as I did one afternoon, pulling my car over to the side of the road, getting out and watching the approach of a gathering thunderstorm, waiting there long moments as the sky grew darker, until at last it burst over me.

Something was happening. All the hours alone with country music and Jesus on the car radio were getting to me. Maybe that was it. Or maybe it was knowing that however fast I drove through the fields, there would always be another field ahead, and another, and another, and another after that. Or maybe it was the sun. When it hung like a wafer in the sky, hour after hour, life naturally slowed down.

RON SHERMAN/NANCY PALMER PHOTOS

Billy Percy, farmer (below), says, "There's *no way* to explain why a southerner stays on the land."



EWING

All of what I told myself was true, but none of it could explain the sudden detours, the unconscious stops along the way, the fact that days were passing with doing nothing. Something else was at work. And then it dawned on me. I didn't want to leave.

I had one day left in the South, and I wanted to savor it, spend the remaining hours with someone who could tell me what I had gone looking for in the first place.

A Mississippi friend suggested the man. "Ya'll go on out to Billy Percy's place," he said. "William Alexander Percy's his real name, but folks never call him that. You go out and see Billy. If you're looking for Jimmy Carter, Billy's as close a man as you're going to find. Only difference is, Billy never left the farm.

"Farm" does not really do Billy Percy's place justice. Jimmy Carter never lived on a place as grand or sprawling as the 6,000 acres of cotton that comprised Trail Lake Plantation, an expanse so vast that Trail Lake was in truth a world unto itself, with its own store, its own restaurant, its own gas station, its own post office and, at the center of it all, the reason for its being, its own cotton gin. Billy Percy, 33, was the master of it all. The landowner, restaurant manager, storekeeper, landlord and, until the U.S. government up and moved the post office on him, postmaster, for which chores he received the munificent sum of 125 federal dollars per month.

Billy was in the office, going over accounts, when I arrived. There was worry in his voice. "Damn rain," he said. "It's hardly let up. Not good this time a year. You take a look at that cotton yonder. Ought to be a lot higher than it is. Would be, too, if it weren't for that damn rain."

The land Billy Percy works and worries over has been in the Percy family since the late 1700s. The original Percy who farmed it got it as a land grant from the Spanish king. As Billy told the story, his ancestor left his wife and children in Europe, promising he'd be home presently, and set sail for the New World and his land. Along the way, however, he stopped off in the Virgin Islands "and met a good-lookin' gal, whom he married, without worrying any about getting a divorce." After a time, his other wife and children came looking for him, and, when they found him, the poor man became so distraught with his tangled domestic affairs that he tied a millstone around his neck, jumped into a local creek and drowned. As it turned out, the two Mrs. Percys discovered that they had more than a dead husband in common. They merged the families into one, and, since then, says Billy, "all the Percys have been arguing about who's legitimate and who's not, though chances are four in five that you're not."

It is, as you might expect, given its history, a remarkable family. Billy's cousin, Walker Percy, is a best-selling novelist *(Love In Ruin)*. A great uncle, Le Roy Percy, served a term as United States senator from Mississippi before he, and the rest of the Southern Bourbon tradition with him, fell victim to the racist James K. Vardaman and his equally notorious crony, Theodore Bilbo. Billy himself went off for finishing at prestigious Episcopal Hall in Virginia and, from there, on to the University of Virginia at Charlottesville, where the southern aristocracy traditionally sent its sons. He studied economics in college, but despaired over the thought of a career on Wall Street and returned home to live his life as a farmer. At 33, he is lean, apparently permanently sunburned and, despite an 18-hour-a-day, seven-day-a-week schedule he keeps at planting and harvest time, far from rich. He is also quite content, thank you.

"WHEN I GO UP NORTH, I HAVE A REAL FEELING THAT THEY ARE A DIFFERENT KIND OF HUMAN BEING THAN I AM. NOT BETTER OR WORSE, JUST DIFFERENT" — BILLY PERCY, COTTON FARMER

Billy is the only member of his generation to return to the farm. His brothers and sisters all went off to the city, figuring, he says, "there had to be a better way to make a living. And, of course," he adds with a drawl, "they were right about that."

Farming, he says, "is not as much fun as it used to be. It's more complicated. It's a more scientific kind of enterprise, with chemicals, big tractors and all. You have greater exposure capital-wise. Now, you're gambling so much more proportionately. Two bad crops and you could lose it all. Even if you do well, you just end up owing the bank a little more each year." The problem, in a word, is DuPont. "They spend 50 or 60 million in a year advertising those synthetics. And that's just one company. Hell, we've only got a fourth of that to spend among all of us. By the way," he says, "is that a cotton shirt you're wearing?" Assured that it is, he smiles and says, "Bet it was hard to get, too, wasn't it?"

The obvious question is why he stays. "It's hard to explain," he answers. "There's *no way* for a southerner to explain why he stays on the land. I don't know what it is. It is just there. With the capital I got invested here, tractors as much as $80,000 a piece, I could get into 15 different businesses and make a better return, and a whole lot easier, too. Stay? I don't know. I guess I feel some responsibility for the people who live here and work here."

Billy Percy's responsibilities, as he calls them, include some 30 families, whose salaries he pays and whose homes he built and maintains rent-free. The oldest man on the place is Saul White, 88, who came to the Percy place in 1915 and has spent few days off of it since. Mr. White still puts in a full day managing the gin, though he is assisted ably by Billy's overseer, Sam Jones, age 68. "I don't know what I'd do if I lost those two men," Billy says, shaking his head.

There was something very southern about the way Billy Percy talked about his responsibilities. A kind of Robert E. Lee liberalism, composed in equal parts of duty, noblesse oblige—a watching out after the darkies who worked for you, whether they happened to be black or not—and God-fearing, down-home goodness. Billy was hardly the first southerner I met who felt that way. I remembered coming to Kanapolis, N.C., a textile town owned by Cannon Mills, and hearing from people how "Uncle Charlie" Cannon had always looked out for his workers, building them homes, schools, hospitals, caring for them when they were sick, burying them when they were dead. As a result, there weren't any unions at Cannon, and there weren't likely to be for a long time to come. "You can't quote me about this," a union organizer, a northerner, as it happened, had told me, "but there's a good reason why we lose elections down here. The plain, damn truth is that a lot of people in Kanapolis loved Charlie Cannon. Uncle Charlie gave them a better life than they ever thought possible. You can't sell them on things like determining their own destiny or bargaining for the wages of their work. As far as they are concerned, Uncle Charlie always looked after them, and somehow he always will."

As I talked to Billy Percy, listening to him speak of "my people," I realized there was a lot of him, and Charlie Cannon, too, in Jimmy Carter. I remembered how I had snickered at some of Carter's exaggerated expressions of kindness: how government "ought to be run by the golden rule," the "personal relationship" he said he wanted to develop with every voter he met, all the talk about "love" and "goodness." But now I wondered: was he being artful or merely southern? Hodding Carter, the editor/publisher of the Greenville *Delta Democrat Times*, and no relation, had tried to give me an answer. "There's guys like him all over the South," Hodding had said, "the good Christian who does right by people. That's how it is in the South. We're all cousins. There's some poor relations and rich relations, but everyone's kin. You don't forget your kin."

Up North we would have called it patronization, and maybe it is. That is why we have unions and welfare and institutionalized solutions for just about every human want or worry. Because that is how people are. That is how the real world works. How it works everywhere but in the South. Even here, though, it is ending, swept aside by progress, and no one knew it better than Billy Percy. Mechanization has meant fewer and fewer people on the farm. Today, one man and a tractor can do in an hour what it used to take 15 men all day to do. Industry has come to the state to lure away the younger workers, and when Billy Percy talks about it, he does not hide his bitterness. "We can't keep people anymore. We're losing population. The kind of industries we've attracted to the state need nothing but menial labor, the most unat-

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tractive kind of industry you can get. We'd be better off if we had nothing, rather than these kind of plants that tie a man to the minimum wage for the rest of his life."

When Billy Percy goes up to New York, even Memphis, he confronts a world he doesn't understand, a world that, by its very existence, threatens his own. The contrasts are obvious. He lives for the outdoors: fishing, hunting, golf, flying airplanes, anything that will keep the sun at his back and the wind in his face. In New York he sees an air-conditioned universe peopled by beings who move out of their air-conditioned homes only to get into their air-conditioned cars to drive to their air-conditioned offices. Where he lives a slow, unhurried existence ("Truth is, I don't do much of anything, really"), he sees northerners as so many frenzied ants, scurrying nowhere. "When I go up there," as he puts it, "I have a real feeling that they are a different kind of human being than I am. Not better or worse, just different."

In the end, it is those differences that keep Billy Percy on the farm, hoping one day that his son will farm there also. He sees Jimmy Carter as sharing those differences, which is why, come the fall, he will support him, give him money and, finally, his vote. "Issues?" he says. "I really don't go in for issues very much, except the price of cotton, and I don't know where Carter stands on that." He laughs. "Matter of fact, I don't know where he stands on much of anything. Doesn't matter, though. He's a moral man. Someone I think I could get along with real easy. That's what I'm looking for: a hard-working man with some morality."

We walked out into Percy's fields, and he began to explain the intricacies of cotton production, how, aside from mechanization and better fertilizers, it really hadn't changed that much in 300 years. "That gin yonder is just what Eli Whitney thought up with a motor attached to it," Percy said. He bent over and picked the bud off one of his cotton plants and began examining it with a worried look. "Should be a lot better," he said. "It's that damn rain." "Lot a history in what you've got in your hand," I offered. "Yeah," he agreed. "Lot a history, good and bad." Just then, Percy's youngest daughter ran over and jumped up in her father's arms. After she left, he told me a story about her that summed up how much that history had changed.

It seems she had come home from school one day, bubbling about a show her second grade was putting on, in which her best friend Cornelius was going to play in the band. "Well, I'll come and see him," her father told her, "but how am I going to know which one he is?" It was easy, she said. There were five boys in the band, and Cornelius would be the one playing the drums. The night Billy Percy went to the school program, he saw that his daughter had told him a greater truth than he'd imagined. There were five boys in the band, just like she said there would be. Four whites and a lone black boy beating on the drums.

NORTHWARD BOUND

The passengers on the northbound plane from Memphis must have thought the fella in the rear of the plane, the one wearing the shiny new hand-tooled boots and the denim jacket, was a little odd. There he was, smiling to himself, with a handful of fresh cotton seeds, a present he had gotten a couple of hours before from a sunburned farmer in Mississippi. But I couldn't help it. It was all so funny—knowing that that evening I would be back in New York at some cocktail party, and that someone would ask me how the trip had been, and I would find myself saying, "You have to realize about the South. . . ."

Less than a month is hardly enough time to realize anything, especially about a region as complex and mysterious as the South. The people I had talked to, the farmers and lawyers, politicians and filling station attendants, housewives and judges, were not a representative sample, if there is such a thing. They were just a handful of people who happened, by accident of birth, to live in a place called the South. I had been less than objective. Starting out, I had come to the South searching for its differences, and, in the process, of course, I had ignored that which we had in common. By understanding that which set us apart, though, I had hoped to uncover what it was about Jimmy Carter that made him, well, so different.

I had not been fully successful. There was still a part of Jimmy Carter that puzzled and worried me, just, as I discovered in my travels, it puzzled and worried southerners. It was hard even to put it into words. Maybe it's the utter aloneness about him, the sheer relentlessness of him, the conviction he seems to carry that his campaign is as much mission as it is politics. It would be a long time before I could fully make up my mind about him, and I wondered if I ever would or even should. Perhaps there ought to be an important sliver of mystery about him, something that defies comprehension and analysis, just as there is about the South.

No one person I met, not even Billy Percy, fully embodied the disparate strands of Carter's personality. Rather, there were pieces of him in all of them, pieces that were now more easily understood: the religion, the vagueness, the rhetoric, the patriotism, the exaggerated kindnesses, even the smile. They were all so southern.

That was the trouble for my northern friends. "But can you trust him?" they would ask me, really meaning, "Can you trust the South? Is it safe now to bring it home?" The implicit assumption, of course, is that we, the North, were home, the haven for decency, right-thinking, civilization and progress, the way, in short, the country ought to be. And I was beginning to wonder about that: which of us had left the country and which had stayed?

The success of Jimmy Carter, I think, is a sign that millions of others are wondering, too. John Seigenthaler, the publisher of the *Tennessean*, told me something that made a lasting impression. "If you want to understand the hold Jimmy Carter has on this country," he said, "you go out and look at the people in the parking lot of the Opry. Average, decent, hard-working men and women who believe in a real God and try to be good to their neighbor. People who pay their taxes, love their country, obey the law and worry if they are going to have enough money to send their kids to college. People who think they've lost something with the way the country has gone, and want it back."

The irony is, the South is losing it, too. Dixie, as John Egerton says, is being Americanized. But not without a fight, the kind that southerners like best: glorious, romantic, doomed.

It is one war I hope the boys in grey win. Not because of the ambitions of a politician named Jimmy Carter, but because of the land that was fast receding outside my airplane window. I knew it then, going home. If there were a chance to get back to what we once were, if there could be change, if there were hope left for this country, any hope at all, it was here . . . in Dixie. ●

Movies

Popular mechanics

By Richard Corliss

Everybody knows that movies are the bastard child of art and industry. Every movie critic has written a dozen variations on the phrase, and taken for granted that it defines a classic, maybe tragic struggle between Good (art) and Evil (industry), between the noble filmmaker (say, Robert Altman) and the small-minded mercenary (say, Dino De Laurentiis). Often, this is the case: Altman certainly ought to be able to direct the movie version of *Ragtime* whether or not De Laurentiis found Altman's *Buffalo Bill and the Indians* something less than, or different from, the action blockbuster he thought he was paying for. But there are other areas—not the most exalted reaches of the cinema, but fascinating all the same—where the director's sensibility and the technician's common sense can produce a workable marriage of art and industry. And on a summer's evening that offers nothing more promising than meaningless midseason ball games and *Mary Hartman* reruns, a piece of high-tooled merchandise like **The Omen** is welcome indeed.

The Omen is the big hit of the summer season, grossing about a million dollars a day in its first few weeks. Yes, part of this is attributable to a monster pre-release publicity campaign that matched the film's own $2.8-million production budget. And *The Omen* is undoubtedly cashing in on the American moviegoer's apparently insatiable interest in demonology. Young Damien may have been sired by Satan and an anonymous jackal, and the film's literary antecedents may be the Book of Revelation and the *National Enquirer*, but its rightful parents are *Rosemary's Baby* and *The Exorcist*. After 19 years of indoctrination by nuns and Jesuits, I should have some facile explanation as to why the three most popular horror movies of the past decade all deal with doubting Catholics and demon children, but I don't. If pressed, I'd say that the attraction of these films has less to do with papist guilt than with parental fears. Every mother and father, new or prospective, has apprehensions about his or her offspring—especially during pregnancy (*Rosemary's Baby*) and when the child reaches the crucial periods of school age (*The Omen*) and puberty (*The Exorcist*). But none of this really explains the *Omen* phenomenon. The ad campaign got viewers interested; the subject matter got them into the theater. What's sending them back in again, dragging their friends?

For one thing, Gregory Peck. Peck's name on a film no longer guarantees black ink (in fact, three film-savvy friends of mine couldn't name Peck's last picture, and neither can I), but his presence assures viewers that *The Omen* will at least have a respectable, old-Hollywood gloss. And casting Peck as the Ambassador to the Court of St. James (a politician-diplomat of the Elliot Richardson stripe) was a minor inspiration. He's such an uncanny iconographic cross between those two Arizona statesmen, Goldwater and Udall, that you wonder why Jimmy Carter didn't pick Peck as his running mate. He looks as if he's been auditioning for Mount Rushmore all his life; a gritty integrity radiates from that parchment-skinned face. He gives *The Omen* what every good horror film needs: an idealized identity figure. So what Peck's character accepts, we accept; what this eminently reasonable man comes to fear, we fear.

Anti-Christ in shorts: Harvey Stephens plays Damien in the smash, *The Omen*.

"I have always held the old-fashioned opinion that the primary object of a work of fiction should be to tell a story," Wilkie Collins wrote in his preface to the second edition of *The Woman in White*. "Here is a novel which has met with a very kind reception because it *is* a Story." *The Omen* has met with a similar reception for much the same reason. If it's not quite a classic of suspense—because author David Seltzer is not nearly a Wilkie Collins—it nonetheless effectively mines the classic suspense tradition. The movie is no Devil's-brew freak show like *The Exorcist*; indeed, a good deal of it is an updated, gorified Hardy Boys adventure, as Peck and his photographer-sidekick (David Warner) search for an unearthly secret through hospitals, monasteries, cemeteries. It's the movie equivalent of what book people call "a good read."

The story traces a skeptic's descent into the apocalyptically irrational (Peck's gradual realization that his adopted son Damien is the Anti-Christ in short pants, born into Peck's wealth and power and waiting for the moment to seize it). As our hero's awareness of the danger increases, the people who can help him—and whom he can help—are killed off (a renegade priest who has warned Peck of the imminent catastrophe gets skewered by a church lightning rod; Peck's wife is thrown out of a hospital window). And Peck's facing of the ultimate challenge (he must kill the boy to save the world) presents him—and the audience—with a delicious moral dilemma (okay, Damien's the devil incarnate, but he's also a five-year-old kid—cute, too).

Seltzer even dares to diminish the challenge in order to strengthen the dilemma. When Peck goes to kill Damien, his only antagonist is the boy's satanic nanny—ferocious enough, but a smallish, middle-aged woman all the same. At the moment when most other horror movies would be straining to focus all our sympathies on the threatened hero, *The Omen* allows us a little engaged ambivalence: our identity figure is turning into something of a wrathful Old Testament patriarch. And when he finally drags Damien off to the nearest consecrated ground for the mandatory stake through the heart, he seems for a moment like an Abraham without a cause; villain and victim have almost shifted roles. The film's punch line leaves us dangling apprehensively aloft—until the inevitable sequel: perhaps *The President's Exorcist*, or *The*

Really Final Days.

Seltzer fills in most of the gaps in story logic with some entertaining ecclesiastical arcana (e.g., six is the Devil's favorite number, and three sixes—the Satanist's birthmark—represent the unholy trinity of Devil, Anti-Christ and False Prophet). But *The Omen* wouldn't work as a movie without the kind of director who's less an auteur than an artisan. A film like this is a complicated operation; its director is responsible for determining just which tools of sight and sound are needed to send the requisite shivers down the viewer's spine, and he's in charge of a team of specialists whose expertise can make the operation a success. No "personal vision" is needed here, just a commanding voice and an eye for the main chance.

Richard Donner, a graduate of TV movies who makes his feature-film debut with *The Omen*, obviously knows the tricks of the trade. He knows, for example, that the first shock effect is the most important, and he films it—the suicide of Damien's first, nice nanny—with textbook precision: quick cuts and fast movement showing children at play; then a close-up of the nanny calling to Damien; a long shot of the nanny on a mansion roof with a rope around her neck; a shot of the nanny jumping off the roof (from the right side of the screen to the left, against the tendency of the Western viewer's eye to read images from left to right); a shot from inside the mansion, as the nanny's body crashes through the window and a maid screams; a close-up of Damien being held by his "mother"; a long shot of the hanging nanny, her body now still. This little montage takes about six seconds of screen time, but its impact will keep us glued to our seats—and our eyes glued to the screen—for the next half-hour of exposition.

Future films will tell if Donner is an acute observer of the human condition; what I saw of *The Omen* (between my fingers) proves to me that he's a young master of shock tactics—as Steven Spielberg proved with *Jaws*—and that he's more adept than Spielberg at handling actors. Lee Remick (Peck's wife) and Billie Whitelaw (the crooked nanny) are a nicely contrasting pair of surrogate mothers. And Donner's direction of Harvey Stephens (Peck's bad boy) plays effectively on the child's voluptuous, wizened face, by turns vulnerable and amorally blank, and helps make the quiet scenes of Peck's bending over his sleeping son the most ominous in the film. Some critics have seen Donner's direction as a triumph of computerized craftsmanship; but surely the ability to tell a convincing story of demonic possession in an age in which both God and the narrative are presumed dead is a craft that borders on art. *The Omen* may still be only an assembly-line vehicle, but at least it assures that you get your kicks on Route 666.

MUSIC

Rock

Toots makes it clear: reggae's got soul

By Ken Emerson

Four years after having been proclaimed by many critics The Next Big Thing, reggae still sounds strange to most American ears. As domesticated by familiar white artists, the chunka-chunka beat has long since become a cliché, but the original wild thing, black Jamaica's eccentric refraction of rock and soul, remains something of a mystery. The Jamaican argot, the Rastafarian religion (why on earth would anyone want to trek to Ethiopia?) and the superficially monotonous rhythms can stir up a murk as thick as the marijuana nimbus that seems to envelop most reggae performers perpetually. What, for instance, is one to make of a young reggae group such as the Mighty Diamonds, a vocal trio that appears, before white audiences, brandishing machetes and singing "When the right time comes" while beaming puppy-dog smiles? When Toots Hibbert induces a crowd of college kids to chant "Rastafari," do they have any idea of what they're embracing?

Toots and the Maytals make it easy, however, for when he yells "Uh uh uh uh, Rastafari all night long," Toots turns an esoteric cult venerating Marcus Garvey and Haile Selassie into a party even Kiss fans can comfortably attend. In fact, though their record sales and publicity make Bob Marley and the Wailers the current front runners in the reggae sweepstakes, Toots and Co. may very well have the inside track. For while Marley explores *terra incognita*, Toots makes reggae more or less accessible by bringing it all back home to the American music that originally inspired it. The title of his new album on Island Records states it plain: *Reggae Got Soul.*

If reggae is ever to capture America, it must reach the black audience which now scarcely knows it exists. Reggae is a staunchly black music, but, like the blues in the sixties, it plays mainly to whites who, quite possibly, prefer its remote primitivism to the more immediate threat of bourgeois black American music. More than Marley, whose emphasis on guitar inclines him toward rock, Toots may be able to attract black listeners by drawing on what is unmistakable (if anachronistic) soul music.

Toots' exuberant abandon on stage and the genial horns that embellish his records evoke Otis Redding and Joe Tex, and the more muted vocals on his new album recall no one so much as Sam Cooke. On one track he even lapses into the doo-wops of the fifties.

Toots certainly strives for familiarity, and has even gone so far as to record an uproarious version of John Denver's "Country Road" (Toots learned it from Ray Charles) in which West Virginia becomes West Jamaica. Spurning the bristling "dread locks" often associated with Rastafarianism and worn by Bob Marley, Toots and his band crop their hair close. Lounging in blue briefs on an unkempt bed, Toots explains, "You can't turn a Rasta by growing your hair. You have to live a clean life to be a Rasta. I don't nap my hair because I see God and God see me and I know I am a comely man. You know, comeliness." He laughed and punned, running an imaginary *comb* over his head.

Talking with a Rasta can be like fishing with your bare hands: you wait patiently, pounce—and the point almost always slips away. Toots has a way of saying "You understand?" which suggests he's delighted you don't, and Rastafarian rhetoric often sounds suspiciously like a potted

JACK BESHEARS

smoke screen–I'm still puzzling over Toots' declaration that "America is good works."

Unrelievedly Rastafarian in his conversation, Toots deplores the commercialization of the cult that reggae's increasing popularity entails and wishes there were "more righteous, religious words." Yet Toots, though he would never acknowledge it ("I have the church in me, I am the living church"), is the least inspirational and the most entertaining of the major reggae performers. He insists that the spirit behind his music is "not the feeling to go to bed and have sex with a woman, but the feeling of love, the feeling of God and to repent." But his antic dancing on stage includes its fair share of crotch thrusts, and "Uh uh uh uh, Rastafari all night long" will cause few listeners to quit their low-down ways; *Reggae Got Soul* recites the books of the Old Testament but also swears, "Everybody Needs Lovin'."

It's these contradictions that make Toots so appealing. As he does high-stepping wind sprints across the stage, Bob Marley seems rapt in another world. Jimmy Cliff's moralism can be moving, but it is also humorless. Toots, on the other hand, is delightfully human. He teases the audience and himself and wants, in a touching way, to be loved. The endless call-and-response routines ("Everyone say Hah! Hah! Hah!") that can make his live performances exhausting are an exchange one seldom begrudges because he pours so much energy in.

Toots can modulate his voice — the most mobile in reggae — from a harsh scream to startling tenderness in an instant, and his adventurous improvisations are unfailingly melodic. On *Reggae Got Soul*, which he describes as "mellow, smooth," Toots is far less raucous than in live performance and on *Funky Kingston*, his last American release. This may be because more tracks here are explicitly religious. On Marley's "Rasta Man," which begins with piano rolls that place what follows in the context of American gospel music, Toots sings with the glowing serenity of the saved: "No, I will never go down to the fire." The sweetness with which he sings "There is a merciful God" leaves little doubt that indeed there is.

When he opened his American tour in Boston a few weeks ago, Toots rather coyly told a crowded club, "Please don't be ashamed of me 'cause I'm a Rasta man." No one was, and shortly thereafter, when he burst into Ray Charles' "What'd I Say," he could have been a Baptist.

Books

See the magus saw his muse in thirds!

By Geoffrey Wolff

Novels by Robertson Davies:
Fifth Business. Signet (238 pp., $1.25, paperback).
The Manticore. Viking (310 pp., $7.95); to be reissued in paperback by Penguin, March 1977.
World of Wonders. Viking (358 pp., $8.95).

The first novel of this trilogy was published in 1970, and everyone who read it raved about it. I did not read it. *The Manticore* was published two years later, and no harsh word was written about it. But I did not read it, either. *World of Wonders*, published several months ago, was widely reviewed, but not by me. So now, bringing the news at last, I feel as though I have been asleep six years in a cave, coated with an inch of Cosmoline. Because Robertson Davies, 62, a Canadian playwright, teacher, newspaper editor and town scold, is a wonder of a novelist, and his three novels have given me a marvel of a week.

Davies has a Mephistophilean beard and the eyes of Mesmer, and magic is the principal conceit of these fictions. He is preoccupied with conjuries and transformations, with disappearances and resurrections, with illusion and delusion. Yet all this theatrical flash—the soul itself of fiction—is anchored here in reason. In Davies' imaginary realm there is no cause without its effect, and no effect without its cause. The first conviction bespeaks a vote of confidence in the mystical union between things, and the second justifies the vote. In combination, this belief in magic and in explanation acts powerfully upon the reader, guiding him across frontiers into such exotic territories as he would not venture without the solace of reason.

Fifth Business, which drags in train the two subsequent elaborations of its plot, is told by a man not unlike the man Robertson Davies shows to the world. Dunstan Ramsay (D.R. instead of R.D.) is ironical and acerbic, witty, learned, a writer and advocate of unadorned expression. Like Davies he is a teacher, and like Davies he has huge eyebrows and commanding features. All three novels are told as monologues, at once entertainments and apologias. *The Manticore* is an analysand's notes and comments to a Jungian analyst, and *World of Wonders* is a magician's autobiography, told be-

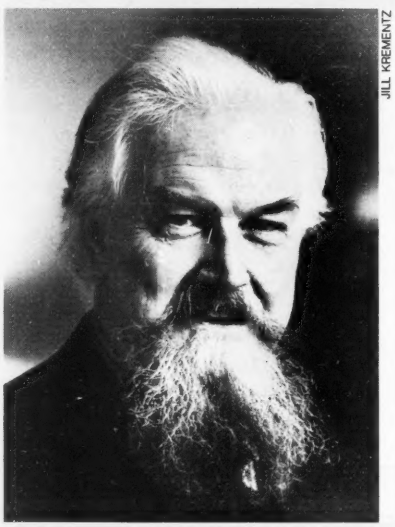
tween work on a film about another magician's life. *Fifth Business* is in form a letter from Dunstan Ramsay, a retired schoolmaster, to his headmaster.

Its story begins in 1908 in the small Canadian village of Deptford. Two days after Christmas, Dunstan and his friend Percy Boyd Staunton, the town rich kid, quarrel, and Staunton throws a snowball at Ramsay, who ducks. The snowball, packed with an egg-shaped piece of pink granite, strikes the head of the lovely young wife of the Baptist minister. She is pregnant, the trauma provokes the birth of her son eighty days premature and she falls into a state that is taken by everyone but Ramsay as madness. The consequences of this initial act ripple through three novels, wave overtaking wave, no shore finally reached: *The Manticore* is by and about David Staunton, son of the snowball-thrower, while *World of Wonders* is by and about the son of the Baptist minister's wife. No act, then, without its effect.

Including play-acts, make believe, dreams, symbolic representations, metaphors. It is Dunstan Ramsay's (and Robertson Davies') odd preoccupation to be obsessed by history (and biography and autobiography) as well as myth, to straddle the worldly and the wonderful. In terms of magic, sleight-of-hand slowed down reveals its devices. Dunstan Ramsay is an authority on saints, their miracles and their places in church history. But so is he a tough-headed Presbyterian, as well as the amateur magician who first teaches the son of the unfortunate Mrs. Dempster the tricks that will later astound and confound the world. All these pieces of the human puzzle of Dunstan Ramsay fit, miraculously, we may say. For Davies, like all right-minded fictioneers, understands, with Ramsay: "I cannot remember a time when I did not take it as understood that everybody has at least two, if not twenty-two, sides to him."

The title *Fifth Business* is taken from the role in drama and opera that is neither hero, heroine, villain or confidante, but which is nevertheless necessary to bring about the recognition and unwinding of the plot. Ramsay fancies himself as taking this part in the story which occupies the trilogy's final two parts, a story provoked by the question: "Who killed Boy Staunton?" This question, asked again and again of biographers and magicians, and by them, is never finally answered, just as no story may be said finally to end. David Staunton, son of Boy (née Percy Boyd), writes that in the serial revelation of his own story he feels at one with "Scheherazade unfolding one of her never-ending, telescopic tales to King Schahriah."

The figure of the novelist, prolonging the unwinding of the plot unto three texts and subtexts, slicing their baloney ever slimmer, is congruent with *Fifth Business*, as with a magician, diverting, mesmerizing. Boy Staunton becomes hugely rich, a man keen to satisfy the world's appetite for what it deceives itself into believing it needs. He becomes a social climber and politician, and soon after meeting Paul Dempster, now the magus Eisengrim,



JILL KREMENTZ

Robertson Davies: a wonder of a novelist, with a belief in magic and explanations.

he drives his car off a dock into the water and drowns. His body is recovered, and found in his mouth is the self-same piece of granite that undid the wits of Mrs. Dempster. Davies milks this mystery dry, but only as an instrument of plot, not as a human conundrum.

Davies loves plot, artifice, fiction. His work has been called old-fashioned, depending as it does on such a Victorian device as coincidence. People again and again go to the ends of the earth only to happen upon one or another of their principal colleagues in this trilogy, and Davies makes no apology for such magical improbabilities, but instead quotes G.K. Chesterton: "Coincidences are a spiritual sort of pun." Whoever believed that the illusionist in truth sawed his lady in half? The fun is in the deception, and as in all else touching art, one of Davies' characters ruminates on the rational explanation of such wonderful fun: Magnus Eisengrim understands that "people want to marvel at something, and the whole spirit of our time is not to let them do it." People will pay a dollar to watch someone pull two bits from his ear, as a martyr will pay with his life to believe in what St. Paul called "the evidence of things not seen."

Like someone eager to know the time of day, who looks at his clock's hands in disregard of its works, the audience at a magic show judges a performance by its effect. No matter that the crude automaton, Abdullah, does its card tricks with the help of the boy, Paul Dempster, crouched in its innards. No matter that Magnus Eisengrim's miraculous Brazen Head issues dire prophecies and scandalous revelations by the agency of a grubby deception. No matter that Robertson Davies exploits a bag of antique fictional tricks.

For fiction's audience, the entertainment is all, and here a world indeed of wonder awaits. War, politics, sex, theology, the Spirit of Carnival, freaks of body and of spirit, high-table talk and low slang, a world made up entire spins between these three acts of imagination. They are not, however, equally pleasing. *Fifth Business*, which cannot manipulate the fictions that follow it, is the most satisfying, and Dunstan Ramsay is the most fulfilled of Davies' characters. The first novel's tricks are performed as though casually, and Ramsay's sense dominates the book's mysteries. *World of Wonders* is at times excessively windy, and Magnus Eisengrim speaks too frequently out of character, but the story of his early days with carnivals, after he is sodomized and kidnapped by a magician at a country fair, is entirely compelling. *The Manticore* is for my taste too slavishly the prisoner of Davies' ardor for Jungian mythic patterns.

But I am offering here only the obligatory cavils, reservations designed to make more credible my enormous affection for what this man's capacious fancy and love of the miraculous have brought to fruit. David Staunton, a criminal lawyer, confesses that in court he is like a magician on stage, adept at "exploiting just that element in human credulity that most arouses me—I mean the *desire* to be deceived." If such a longing, for the benign illusion of transformation and elevation rather than for escape through a trap door into the muck of fact, is to be nurtured, it is nowhere better nurtured than by such extraordinary contraptions as these three tricks.

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Final Tribute

Folding up the stairway to the stars/By Mark Goodman

There was a wondrously tacky magic about the old amateur hours, and perhaps the most engaging thing about them was that they were so painfully amateurish. First, the emcee, inevitably a beery fellow with an impermissible bow tie, a hideous leer and a brown-paper wrapped pint bottle in his hip pocket. He would introduce the first act, usually the twin girls in sequined outfits from Ocala. Whipped into a frenzy of no-necked-monster theatricality by their frustrated mother, they danced their way under your skin with their rendition of "Stairway to the Stars." Then came the black truck driver from Elyria to sing "Ol' Man River" ("Where'd you learn to sing, sir?" the emcee would ask brightly. "Well, I'd be drivin' my truck. . ."). The sailor from San Diego would dance on the xylophone, the seal would play "Silent Night" and "God Bless America" on the seal horns and the next Dick Cantino would ripple the accordian keys with a socko finale of "Because," "Moonlight and Roses" and the eternal, ever-popular "Lady of Spain."

They were designed to delight and amuse you, ladies and gentlemen, without ever producing a modicum of real talent. That is, with the extraordinary exception of Ted Mack's *Original Amateur Hour*. For 14 years on the radio and another 22 on television, *Amateur Hour* introduced into American living rooms some of the flashiest show-business entertainers of the mid-century. Thanks to Mack's tireless search for talent, we now have: Robert Merrill, Beverly Sills, Maria Callas; Pat Boone, Ann-Margret, Jerry Vale; Jack Carter, Larry Storch, Stubby Kaye; not to mention Connie Francis and Teresa Brewer. Without Ted Mack we would not have Bert Parks, and without Bert Parks we would not have the annual *Phyllis George Show* from Atlantic City. Had Ted Mack not been bold enough to journey into deepest New Jersey in his quest, we might never have heard the mellifluous melodies of the Hoboken Four and their ectomorphic lead singer, Frank Sinatra.

Of course, these are among the 500 or so contestants who made it big after their appearance on Ted Mack's *Original Amateur Hour*. That's a rather doleful percentage, considering in 35 years Mack auditioned some 1 million acts (or 3.5 million performers, including all livestock). And put around 18,000 on the air. Nor was Mack's eye always on target. On a night in Tupelo, Miss., that he would never live down, Ted Mack passed up a sullen, pelvis-wielding singer named Elvis Presley. (He later saw no redeeming entertainment value in a ululating ukelele player named Tiny Tim, but this somehow strikes me as less than unthinkable.)

Anyway, simple, unadorned talent was not what made *The Original Amateur Hour* survive longer than any other variety show in TV history. Let us be plain: it was the freaks, of which sailors on xylophones and seals on horns were the merest preliminary. The audience, which selected the winner via the applause meter, defined the tone of the show the night it chose as

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winner, over Ann-Margret, a lad from Mexico City who played "La Cucaracha" on a laurel leaf. He joined an incredible pantheon of one-man bands, bird imitators, baton twirlers; people who played tones on a miraculous assortment of dinnerware, fruit and glass (one young musician with a keen eye for commerce won the night by rapping out a marimba-band medley on several bottles of Geritol, the show's major sponsor). There was the fellow who played a remarkable tattoo of "Yankee Doodle" on his head with a mallet; another swept to victory by whistling through his navel. And, of course, the talking horses and talking dogs, who would sometimes come across and sometimes not. "How much is two and two?" the trainer would ask. "Woof, woof," would be the response.

The show was practically Mack's whole life. He grew up in Greeley, Colorado, with Glenn Miller, and hit the big band trail with his buddy in the twenties. But he realized the day he sat down next to another young clarinetist named Benny Goodman that he was never going to be a top-drawer musician. He joined *The Original Amateur Hour* in 1934 as assistant to the star, Major Bowes. When Bowes died a year later, Mack took over for good, eventually bringing the show to TV in 1948. He went off the air in 1970. The problem was the reverse of one plaguing another profession: too many professionals mucking up the amateurs' play. Mack took to the college lecture circuit, where enthusiastic kids got him to emcee burlesque of *The Amateur Hour*. But camp is always, always, to be distinguished from authentic flavor: how can you burlesque the burlesque?

Because that is precisely what Ted Mack's *Original Amateur Hour* was: the last spangled vestige of the carny wagon, the Chautauqua tent, the vaudeville stage. The bird-callers and navel-whistlers were but one remove from the flame-eaters and alligator ladies, the plucky, shameless grotesques so beloved by our forebearers on the American frontier. Ted Mack beamed this deliciously barbarous fascination into our homes for the last time.

Now he has passed away, leaving us with the pallid, packaged, ersatz grotesqueries of Carol Burnett. I, for one, prefer to sit back, close my eyes and listen for the distant honk of seal horns and the satiny riffs of "Lady of Spain" and the sharp, sweet rat-a-tat-tat of taps up the stairway to the impossible stars. ●